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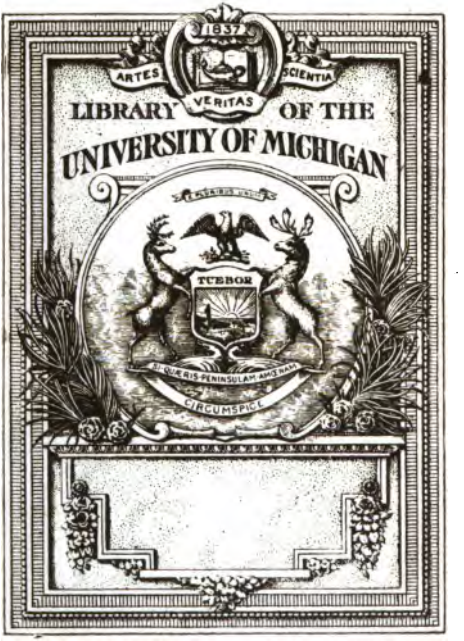
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MRS. HEPHÆSTUS

AND OTHER SHORT STORIES

TOGETHER WITH

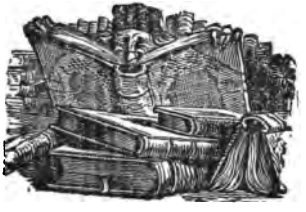
WEST POINT

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

GEORGE A. BAKER

Author of "Point Lace and Diamonds," "The Bad Habits of Good Society," etc.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I wish to thank the Century Company in plain language for the courtesy which enables me to include "The Child of the Regiment" and "The Invasion of Kleindorf" in this volume. Both stories were, some time ago, accepted and paid for by the Century Company, the first for "St. Nicholas," the second for the Century Magazine. Unable to publish them before the date fixed for the appearance of this volume, the company waived its undisputed rights, and without compensation, or even reimbursement, allowed their publication in this form.

January 14, 1887. G. A. B.

MRS. HEPHÆSTUS.

I HAVE a story to tell. I, Alfred Graves, attorney and counsellor-at-law, solicitor in bankruptcy, proctor in admiralty, and numerous other things, am its hero; a bronze of the Venus of Milo, that adorns my bachelor apartments, is its heroine.

The story began last Halloween. The Hargraves gave a grand german, and I went. I was a pronounced cynic and woman-hater in those days. Fair reader, you must forgive me for it! I had not yet met Gracie Carroll. At the Hargraves', after my usual custom, I had passed most of the evening in the dressing-room, in company with one or two young gentlemen temporarily converted to my doctrines by a lack of partners for the german. How we slandered the sex that night! The widow Clicquot was the only lady present, and inspired by the example of my companions, I was, contrary to my usual custom, somewhat marked in my attentions to her.

Consequently—the astute reader will observe

that the use of this adverb implies an admission —when I reached home I seated myself upon the edge of my bed, like Caius Marius amid the ruins of Carthage, and mentally railed upon the modern belle in all her various phases.

Mrs. Hephæstus—the bronze, I mean—stood before me. I looked at her as I reverized, and she became the text of my Jeremiad. What woman of our modern world could compare with that Greek goddess? Profane wretch that I was, I wished that she were once more on earth and in a Pingat dress, that I might rejoice in the utter despair and vexation of the reigning belles of New York society—all but the widow Clicquot. Averse as I was to social martyrdom, I would rejoice to be her escort to the scene of her triumphs. That idea finally took sole possession of me, and at last—remember the "consequently"—I stood up, walked over to her, placed my opera hat under my arm in the most approved fashion, and with that happy combination of ease and elegance only to be acquired in the society of the vivacious widow to whom I have already had occasion to refer, I said, bowing low, "Madam, I have never had the honor of being presented to you, but having known you by sight for so long, I hope my presumption may be pardoned. May I be your escort to the charity ball this season?"

Now, I don't suppose any one will believe this part of my story. Nevertheless it's true. She—the Venus—the bronze—bowed and smiled as any girl would, her lips parted, and she said plainly, in the sweetest voice I had ever heard, "Certainly, Mr. Graves. I shall be most happy."

The words were so naturally spoken that, from force of habit, probably, I began something about "supposing that eleven would be early enough to call;" and then, suddenly realizing what a dreadful breach of those laws of action to which bronze images ought to conform I had just witnessed, I discovered what being horribly frightened felt like. I did not inquire what ailed the bronze; the question in my mind was what ailed me. I got ready for bed hastily, and then was afraid to turn the gas out.

Next morning at breakfast I wondered greatly that a couple of glasses of wine had affected me so much, and after that thought no more of the matter.

My mother and Jennie—my sister, that is—always come in town from the old place toward the holidays, and stay till the warm weather commences. They were stopping at the Brevoort then, and I dined with them most evenings.

It was a fortnight perhaps after the Hargraves' contribution to last winter's gayeties, that one evening I took them to the opera. When I

reached my bedroom that night I noticed that my bronze was not in its usual place.

Next morning I looked everywhere for it, and converted my rooms into a perfect chaos of overturned furniture. I called down the janitor; he called up the chambermaids. The neat-handed and ruby-headed Phyllis, to whose tender mercies my household gods and goddess were committed, at last confessed that she had left my door open that day. Some sneak thief had reason to regard Phyllis in the light of a special Providence.

I was intensely provoked. The bronze is a fine one, and I had it when I was in college. I employed a detective—with the natural result.

That Saturday night, when I went round to the hotel, I found mother and Jennie in a state of marvellous excitement over some people who had arrived at the hotel during the day. Jennie had seen the lady, and was rapidly becoming rhapsodic in regard to her face and her toilets. "The most perfect Greek profile I ever saw—like a statue. Such a figure; and her dress—one of Worth's legendary costumes, such as he used to design for the Metternich. With a style of its own that suited her to perfection—any one else would look like I don't know what in it." Thus my enthusiastic and somewhat incoherent sister. She had discovered the lady's name from the hotel register, whereon appeared the entry,

"Mr. and Mrs. Cytheron Hephæstus, four servants, Liverpool."

Howard Eggleston, the hotel oracle, mounted his tripod and announced that Mr. Hephæstus must be a Greek merchant who, having made a fortune in figs and citron, had purchased among other luxuries a young wife, and was now undergoing an extended honeymoon trip.

The following Monday I went to the hotel quite early in the afternoon, and ran up to mother's parlor, hardly expecting to find her returned from her afternoon drive. She was in, though, and another lady, a stranger to me, was with her. Mother of course presented me. "Mrs. Hephæstus, this is my son, Mr. Alfred Graves."

Mother and Jennie had become acquainted with the stranger by some of the mysterious means known to ladies living in hotels.

While mother and Mrs. Hephæstus told each other all about themselves and their servant-girls, after the manner of women, I retired into a corner and took observations.

A lovely face truly. The pure Greek type, as Jennie had said—a low, broad forehead over level brows, and eyes as blue and deep as the water in that wonderful grotto at Capri; the nose straight and delicate, and lips whose like existed nowhere save in sculpture. She was, to use the *argot* of good society, a "demi-blonde," with

brown hair—that shade of brown in which the sunbeams love to linger—worn parted and waving low over the forehead, as the fashion then was, drawn over her cameo-like ears, and fastened in a loose knot at the back of her head. The effect was as beautiful as it was simple. I had never been quite certain before what the shape of a woman's head really was.

Though her face and figure were statuesque, she talked marvellously well. Quick, vivacious, and fanciful, she made that well-worn theme the shortcomings of servants interesting even to me. She had brought two island girls with her as maids; Eirene and Thalia she called them, and numberless were the blunders committed by them since their introduction to civilization. Her two diminutive footmen, or pages, or whatever they were, seemed, on the other hand, to be treasures above price. She spoke of them as Eros and Himeros, and said they were at home in every part of the world, and could speak more languages than she could count. Mother remarked on the odd names of her servants. "They are old Greek names," she said, "as are my own and my husband's; they have come down to our day from classic times." Howard Eggleston had, for a wonder, been partly right. Her husband was a Greek, and, as she said, a "sort of a merchant;" but she had been married

more years than she'd like to tell, and had several children, whom she had left behind. Of course mother exclaimed at her youthful appearance. "My dear Mrs. Graves," she replied, "if I told you my age, I should frighten you; I'm as old as the hills." She didn't look more than twenty.

So she and mother chatted while I sat and listened. There was a certain peculiarity about her way of talking. Mother and Jennie remarked it as well as myself. It was not an accent, or anything of that sort. While she was speaking we understood her perfectly, but nevertheless it seemed that it was not our own language that we heard, but some strange tongue, which by an incomprehensible change in our faculties we were temporarily enabled to understand. I think the Parthians, and the Elamites, and the rest of them must have noticed the same peculiarity in the speech of the apostles when they heard every man his own tongue wherein he was born that Whitsunday in Jerusalem.

I had been there nearly an hour before a waiter came to inform Mrs. Hephæstus that Mr. Hephæstus was waiting to take her in to dinner. She bade mother *au revoir*, and with a smile said to me, "Good-night, Mr. Graves; I shall be happy to see you again. Are you always so quiet?" She was gone.

At once it struck me that I had seen that face and heard that voice somewhere before. I was certain this was not the first time she had smiled at me, not the first time I had heard that strange-sounding language of hers. When was that first time ?

I saw Mrs. Hephæstus often after that evening. She spent a great deal of time in mother's apartments, and I met her there almost every afternoon. Mother and Jennie both liked her, and were never tired of praising her. I did not share their unbounded admiration. In spite of her beauty, her wit, and her evident position in society, something seemed to whisper to me, " This is not a woman with whom your mother and your sister ought to be intimate."

Mrs. Hephæstus never brought her husband with her to our parlor, but she and mother talked about him continually. They were anything but a congenial couple, it appeared. He was wofully jealous of his beautiful wife. She was fond of gayety, but he hated it, so the poor woman hardly went anywhere. When this revelation was made, mother at once offered my services as her escort. They were accepted, and from that hour on I had not an evening I could call my own. Mother procured her invitations to a great many parties, whither, of course, I was obliged to accompany her.

The constant attention I was obliged to bestow upon her was a direful infliction. I complained bitterly, and Jennie thereat scolded, while mother made pointed references to the sin of selfishness. So peace fled from our limited family circle, and I wished that Hephæstus and his lovely wife could be suddenly transported to some rural retreat on the sunny slope of a lunar mountain.

We were not, as a rule, an inharmonious family; but really all my usual habits of life had been so entirely broken up by Mrs. Hephæstus, that a little irritation on my part was unavoidable; and Jennie was not by any means herself, either. She was suffering from a form of mental disease that most people laugh at until they have an attack themselves, known as an unrequited passion. The object thereof was Harry Berrian. Harry was my most intimate friend, a careless, happy, impecunious fellow, who liked all women too well ever to devote himself to any single one. I had utilized him as an escort for Jennie during the winter. Jennie was bright and pretty. Harry enjoyed her society, and had about as much idea of falling in love with her as he had of how he was ever going to pay his debts. Jennie didn't stop to have any ideas on the subject of falling in love with him—she simply fell. She kept her secret so well that neither mother nor I

ever suspected what had happened. But there was one not to be deceived in such matters—Mrs. Hephæstus—and by a little judicious sympathy she drew the whole story from Jennie, who made her promise most solemnly never—never to breathe a word of it to any one, and concluded her confession with a good, hearty cry, to the great and lasting detriment of her bonnet ribbons. Mrs. Hephæstus was at once deeply interested.

A night or two after Jennie was going to some function with Berrian, and Mrs. Hephæstus insisted that she, and she only, should dress my sister for the occasion. She certainly proved herself an expert lady's-maid. Never had I seen my pretty little sister look so charming, so winning, so wholly irresistible. I could not keep my eyes off her, and at last I noticed one unusual adjunct to her toilet—an odd, old-fashioned belt, or girdle, seemingly of parchment; it was bordered with silver and worked all over with Greek characters and quaint devices in seed pearls. I saw Berrian start and catch his breath when he came in and Jennie spoke to him; he acted all the while he was in the room as if he were so preoccupied that he hardly knew what he was doing. When Mrs. Hephæstus dismissed Jennie with a parting kiss, she had whispered, "It's all right, pet. I always said he'd love you, and you'll find out to-

night that I was right, or my name's not Aphrodite." Have I mentioned that Mrs. Hephæstus's first name was the same as that of the Greek goddess of love?

The result justified her confidence. Berrian did not leave Jennie's side during the evening, and having inveigled her upstairs after supper before the rest of the people, he proposed in form, was accepted, and such raptures as the presence of the musicians admitted of were duly gone through with.

Now, by the terms of our father's will, Jennie was not to marry without the consent of both mother and myself first had and obtained, under penalty of forfeiting all the property given, devised, and bequeathed to her by said will, both real and personal, together with—well, I cannot recall the exact phraseology, but it covered everything she had, might have, or could have. In consequence, then, of the events just narrated, and of this testamentary provision, Harry deemed it absolutely necessary to call upon me at a most unholy hour the very next morning. I was at my club breakfasting when he burst upon me with the startling news of his and Jennie's brilliant exploit, and a confident and somewhat hilarious request for my guardianly consent and brotherly blessing.

I was astonished and disgusted. Berrian had

never been able to make enough to keep himself since he came of age. His liabilities bore to his assets the proportion of infinity to zero, and yet he had the astounding impudence to think of marrying, and of marrying my sister.

My answer was like the campaigns of the first Napoleon—"short, sharp, and decisive." Then he expostulated. I lectured him. We both grew angry, called each other names, and parted in a rage.

I certainly was sorry about the affair, but I could not help feeling that I had greatly distinguished myself for sound common-sense. I looked forward almost with pleasure to the sensible brotherly talk I would have with Jennie. I pictured to myself how, after a short crying spell, she would write Harry a very friendly but very decided note of dismissal, and how all would end happily, leaving me quite the domestic hero.

Never was a man more wofully mistaken. I had hardly a chance to say one word, brotherly or otherwise. Jennie did not cry even a suspicion of a tear; she blazed. I was "heartless," "mercenary," "interfering," and numerous other things. I might go to Guinea with my objections; she'd marry her "Hal" (the idea of calling him Hal!) whether I consented or not, and I might keep the money to pay for my nasty cigars and things. Mother took her part entirely.

I stayed away from my people entirely after that night. I was very angry with Mrs. Hephæstus, for I was convinced that she had exerted some strong though mysterious influence in bringing about the match.

I was therefore not delighted when I received a note from her reminding me that I had promised to escort her to a reception at the Academy of Design. I reluctantly enough encased myself in my dress-coat, and drove to the Brevoort for her. She looked charming, and was so pleasant that by the time we reached Twenty-third Street I had got quite into tune again.

I was proud of my companion's beauty when I heard the murmurs of admiration that greeted her as we came up the broad staircase together. We wandered about the rooms until she complained of being tired, and I proposed that we should go into the Antique School, where it would probably be cooler and less crowded. So we went. The rooms downstairs were almost deserted. She glanced carelessly at the mighty products of a dead art that crowd the walls, but seemed little interested in them.

"I have seen them all before," she said—"the originals of most of them; and these casts are cold and lifeless."

I brought a chair for her that she might rest. "No, not here—not here! You will think me

foolish ; but I cannot stay in the same room with that."

She pointed to the Venus of Milo that stood near us. I looked at it. I glanced from it to her. The vague resemblance to some familiar face that had haunted me ever since I had first seen her was placed at last. As I stood in silent wonder, she bent a little forward, and with one foot slightly advanced, stood as if in a trance, motionless, and looking as pale and lifeless as the cast itself. A vague resemblance did I say ? The likeness was perfect. Every feature, every wave of her brown hair, her pose, her very expression, were those of the statue—those (how the thought flashed upon me !) of my stolen bronze. I stood as motionless as she, wild fancies whirling through my brain, until I felt that I must go mad unless I broke the spell that seemed to bind us both. With an effort I regained my self-command, and feeling that I must say something at once, asked, " Shall we go into the next room ?"

Without moving from her place she slightly bowed, smiled with the same smile that I had seen on the lips of my bronze on Christmas eve, and, as if with no volition of her own, spoke those commonplace words which I felt she must : " Certainly, Mr. Graves. I shall be most happy."

Just then some people came into the room, and

with an effort painfully perceptible, she slowly drew back from the position she had so long maintained.

She was so pale that I thought she was going to faint, and caught her arm to support her.

"What can it mean?" I thought. "Who is this woman? The perfect likeness to the statue —my bronze—Halloween." You may guess the wild idea to which I, a resident of the city of New York, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and eighty-five, was ashamed to give definite shape, even in my own mind.

My meditations were interrupted by Mrs. Hephæstus. "Mr. Graves, I want to say something very serious to you, and you will please listen. You will think me, no doubt, dreadfully impertinent, and all that, but in virtue of my being older and ever so much wiser than you, I am going to lecture you severely on the way you have acted about Jennie and Mr. Berrian."

"Madam," I replied, stiffly, "I really don't know—"

"Of course you don't—by what right a stranger interferes in a family matter. However, there isn't the slightest necessity that you should know; all you have to do is to listen. Your mother's consent has been given, but Jennie must lose her fortune if she marries without

first obtaining yours as well. I don't see what possessed your father. Mr. Berrian knows this, and refuses, as he says, to selfishly allow his little girl's love for him to drag her into poverty. Just as if he weren't more to her than forty fortunes. If I were in his place, I would marry her whether or no; but since he feels as he does, your consent must be had, and I am going to make you give it. Now don't speak! Just listen. I propose to reason with you first. Just answer me this. From what motive ought people to marry?"

"Well, for love, I suppose—if they can afford to. Understand me, I don't believe in marrying for money; but I don't believe either that people ought to marry without the means of living comfortably, no matter how much they may love each other."

"Don't you suppose Mr. Berrian and Jennie love each other?" she asked, entirely ignoring the point, after the manner of women.

"They think they do, no doubt."

"Think they do! What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that they are two very young and very foolish persons; that they are greatly taken with each other just at present, and think that they can't live apart; and that in three months, if officious persons do not interfere, they will get

bravely over this undying passion, and thank me for acting as I have."

"Thanks for your extremely courteous allusion to me," she interpolated, and I went on.

"My observation compels me to look upon the feeling called love as a phase of human folly which people imagine they *must* experience because every one else has imagined so before them. Therefore they work themselves into a state as near their idea of what the feeling ought to be as they conveniently can, and proclaim themselves 'in love.' I do not believe in love. If two people perfectly suitable to each other in more important respects are induced by this feeling to marry, it does very well; but when it leads people in Berrian's position into committing such a piece of folly as he has, it is simply a nuisance."

"What do you call more important things?" she asked as I paused. She seemed to be taking a most extraordinary interest in the discussion, for her tone was absolutely angry.

"I mean money, position, education, and all that. Love probably makes things very delightful so long as money pays the bills; but it soon flies before the perpetual ignoble sacrifices, mean economies, and petty annoyances that poverty brings into every-day life."

"Mr. Graves, you have never loved. Are you

not, therefore, discussing a subject about which you are utterly ignorant? A marriage without love, although there is every worldly advantage —wealth, station, what you will, is—a hell. I mean it. Love is the one, the only thing to be considered."

"Nonsense, madam! Suppose my sister should love your footman—should love him with such depth of passion as never existed save in the imaginations of poets, and he should return that love—would you have me consent to their marriage?"

"Yes," said she, firmly. "I would."

"Mrs. Hephæstus, we can never agree on this subject. I took you for a clear-headed, sensible woman of the world. You talk like a novel-crazed school-girl. This discussion is utterly useless. Once for all, I will never give my consent. Let us talk of something else."

"Not yet," she said, rising, with a superb wrath shining in her great blue eyes. "You have seen fit to tell me I talk like a school-girl; you talk, like a raw boy, of feelings you are not old enough to know. I *am* a woman of the world, and I am far more than that. No one can know better the torture, the hopeless misery of a marriage where no love is. No one better, what love can do. You, in your boyish self-conceit, in your knowledge of the world, gained

in the semi-barbarous society of New York, among its doll women and unmanly men, talk slightingly of the noblest feeling your human nature is capable of, the only reminder left you of your heavenly origin. And, sir, you have insulted me. Why do you look astonished? You will know how deeply some day. You will never give your consent? We shall see. I told you that I should reason with you first. I told you, too, that I would make you give it. I meant that, and I will make you. You shall know what love is erelong; you shall love madly, devotedly, hopelessly, and eat your heart with longing until Aphrodite forgives the blasphemy you have spoken; she never yet failed to punish an insult to her divinity. Now we will talk of something else; but on the night of the charity ball remember what I have said to you."

As we were driving home she laughingly apologized for her vehemence. "I believe we almost quarrelled; but it doesn't matter. We never will again, will we? We will be the very best of friends." Some mysterious power in her voice fairly thrilled me.

"You spoke of 'the charity,'" I said. "Are you going?"

"Am I going? Aren't you rather forgetful, don't you think? I verily believe you've forgotten you are to take me! By the by, Hephæstus

has secured a box, so you needn't bother about that."

I had not the faintest recollection of ever having asked her to go, but naturally didn't say so.

It took me far longer than usual to say good-night, and her hand lay in mine for more seconds than ordinary courtesy, perhaps, required. What a warm, soft hand it was! Aided and abetted by a glance that was almost tender, its pressure put fancies in my head that kept me smoking and musing until long after midnight.

When I called on her shortly after, Thalia brought me down word that she had taken a severe cold, and was obliged to keep her room. I sent up my condolences, and went disappointed away. I did not see her for a week, though I called every day, and sent her flowers in quantities.

On the morning preceding the charity ball I had a note from her to tell me she had recovered, and would expect me at ten that evening. I was most unusually excited. I took no interest in my dinner, was at the Brevoort by half after nine, and waited a century until I could send up my card. She came down to me. She was so enveloped in fleecy wraps that I could see but little of her face; but as she stretched out her hand to greet me a wave of some strong feeling, before unknown, swept over me. I felt that I loved

her. Mechanically I assisted her into her carriage, and we rode off into the night. At last she spoke :

"What makes you so awfully quiet? You haven't said a word, not even the proper thing about my getting well."

"Excuse my rudeness, won't you? I was thinking."

"Of what, pray?"

"You'll not be angry if I tell you?"

"Thanks for the compliment to my temper. I'll try not. Tell me!"

"Of you and of myself—of your loveliness and my own unworthiness."

That absurd speech must have told her the state of mind I was in, for her laugh was forced as she replied :

"You wretched creature! I know I'm not fit to be seen with this horrid cold. My eyes are dreadful, and no amount of pearl powder will effectually disguise the color of my unfortunate nose. But when I've come out in defiance of Doctor Clark's orders, Hephæstus's wrath, and my own common-sense, just to keep an engagement with you, you ought to be the last person in the world to make fun of me."

"Make fun of you! Ah, if you knew!"

"Oh, well, I didn't mean it! But what has inspired you all at once with this admiration of

my 'loveliness'? I never observed it in you before. Probably it's because I'm so wrapped up that you can't see anything but my eyebrows. Suppose I wear a thick veil—I've been told it is becoming to me—and hide them too: would you think me lovelier still?"

"Don't slander yourself! I meant what I said. Is it strange that I should? Venus is the world's ideal of womanly beauty, and if the old sculptors can be depended upon, her face and form are repeated in your own."

"So you've noticed that ridiculous resemblance too? I was afraid you had that night at the Academy—that's why I wouldn't stay in the room where the statue was. I have taken a perfect dislike to it for that very reason. It's the bane of my life."

Whereupon I made this remarkably bright speech:

"Even in plaster, then, Venus fulfils her mission. They say that she is the bane of every one's existence, and I am beginning to believe it."

"What, you! Are you touched, in spite of your philosophy? A hopeless passion would be but a proper punishment for the heresy you talked the other night. Remember what I said to you!"

"I fear your prophecy is fulfilled. It is the night of the charity ball, and I remember. You may have cause to remember this night, too."

Just then, as the Casino lamps flashed by, I surprised in her eyes a triumphant look that puzzled me, and kept me silent until our carriage-door was opened for us by the policeman at the entrance of the Opera House.

I cannot fitly describe Mrs. Hephæstus as she appeared that night. There were pearls on her arms, at her throat, and in her hair, while clasping her slender waist was that gleaming girdle which Jennie had worn on the night Harry proposed to her.

We went on the floor and danced waltz after waltz. After about an hour we retired to our box. When we were seated, Mrs. Hephæstus said, quite earnestly for her, "Mr. Graves, you must tell me what troubles you. Excuse me for noticing it, but you have not been yourself all the evening. Come, tell me!"

"I cannot."

"Your manner really alarms me, do you know? Why can't you tell me?"

"Because you are married."

"More mysterious than ever! How in the name of common-sense can my marriage affect the matter? Would you tell me if I were not?"

"I would."

"Then, for this one evening, you may consider me not married. Go on."

There was a tone in her voice, a look in her

eyes that gave these words deep meaning, and so I spoke what was in my heart. I told her how I loved her. She listened coldly, and answered, "Mr. Graves, don't you think that a younger and more unsophisticated woman than I would be a better subject for you to practise on?"

I protested; she laughed at me; my words grew more earnest, my manner more impassioned.

"Mr. Graves," she said finally, "I will answer you seriously as befits so solemn an occasion. I have had some little experience, but it is really as much as I can do to keep myself from believing you in earnest. You are the most accomplished actor I ever saw in my life. Now don't! I can't say any more, and that ought to satisfy you."

"You don't trust me. Would you not give me another sort of an answer if you did?"

"If I did believe you, my answer would not be long in coming, and would need no words."

I don't know what I did not offer to prove my devotion. I implored her to set me some mighty task to be accomplished for her sweet sake.

"Even if I knew anything to ask of you, I wouldn't do it. You remember, I did ask a favor of you once; I don't care to be refused a second time."

"Impossible! I never could have said no to

you." I did not remember the Berrian affair at all. I recalled nothing that ever happened to me before Mrs. Hephæstus had entered the parlor of the Brevoort that evening. My life seemed to date from that time.

"Your answer shows how insincere you are. You know perfectly well what I mean."

She spoke so coldly that my heart sank. I turned away, and looked about the building. Jennie and Harry came in from the lobby, and entered Mrs. Murdoch's box. Mrs. Murdoch had chaperoned Jennie that night. I saw them, and knew what Mrs. Hephæstus referred to.

"I was wrong," I said, impulsively. "I can't imagine how I could act as I did that night. If you wish it, I will give my consent at once. Would it please you?"

"I have already told you what my wishes were."

"Come with me now; I will go to them; I will tell them. Come!"

"Do you mean this?"

I answered her by offering her my arm. As she took it, she whispered, "This is good of you; I like you for this; but what of all your cynical wisdom?"

"I was a fool. I was talking of what I knew nothing about. I know now. I know what love is. You have taught me."

She took me to them, and I kept my promise. There was no demonstration. A front row box at the charity ball is not specially adapted to such purposes, and I wanted to get away with Mrs. Hephæstus—be alone with her again. But she disregarded my hints, and sat talking with Jennie, until Mrs. Murdoch came to say that they must be going. Mrs. Hephæstus insisted upon going, too.

We entered our carriage. My companion sank down in a corner with a weary sigh, and rested her beautiful head on the cushions, a delicious languor sleeping in her half-closed eyes. Half kneeling beside her, I told once more my passionate love. What I said I know not. I was in a delirium. I was—I say it wittingly, and I believe it solemnly—possessed. Suddenly her arms were around my neck, her head was on my shoulder, and her soft warm lips were murmuring in my ear, "My darling, my darling! You know I love you better than the whole world! better than my life! better than my honor!"

I drew her close to me. She clung upon my neck with her lithe white arms, and straining her throbbing bosom against my breast, gave me such kisses as Adonis had won, I half believed, from those same lips.

There I held her, kissing lip and forehead and hair, rounded arm and ivory shoulder, murmur-

ing broken, inconsequent, passionate words, while her answering lips burnt mine with glowing caresses. Her broken phrases mated mine, and her blue eyes now seemed looking with fierce, loving exultation into my very soul, and now were deep and languid, as if all outward perceptions were lost in some enrapturing dream.

Bah ! When I think of that night I am disgusted with myself. I have never told Gracie about it yet, and it's almost the only thing that I have not. When I stepped out of the carriage I was half drunk with passion. And she—she clung to me, trembling as if she would fall ; but only for a few seconds. Then her whole manner changed. In a cold, strange voice she said, " Come in, Mr. Graves, with me. The halls are lonely, and you must escort me to my own parlor." I followed her through the half-lighted passages. At her knock, her husband himself opened the door ; he greeted me merely by a motion to enter. Then he said gravely to his wife, " Is it done ?"

" It is," she answered, " and I am very weary." They took no notice whatever of me ; I never even thought of resenting this, for I actually found myself deeply and unaccountably awe-stricken before this boorish Greek merchant and his flirting wife. Without a word she took a small silver vase from the table, and emptied its

contents upon the burning coals of the grate. A thick white smoke filled the room and hid everything. I was unable to move or speak. The silence was utterly unbroken for awhile. At last I heard a low, rushing sound, like wavelets surging on a pebbly shore, and felt a fresh, damp wind, like the morning breath of the sea, blowing in my heated face.

Far away there rose weird music, women's voices singing. I could hear every word of the mysterious chorus.

In joyful strains it sang the birth of Aphrodite, queen of the world, immortal, and all-powerful over human hearts—of the temples that rose among the cypress groves and the golden altars that blazed in her honor. It recited the fate of those who had blasphemed her and neglected her worship. Then the music was quick and angry, while the singers sang that in these later days men had disgraced the lovely queen, and side by side with her spotless altars had set those of Plutus, the gold demon. One sacrilegious wretch had, in the very presence of the goddess, questioned her omnipotence, sneered at her divinity. In long, wailing notes they prophesied his punishment. He should love as man never loved before; he should love the insulted goddess in their own person with a mad, hopeless, never-satisfied longing that should wither his

heart and sear his brain. But again the melody changed, and was sweet and hopeful as they sang how, in the mercy of the goddess, even this blasphemer might find hope; that when a mortal woman, pure and true, should pity him and love him; when at her feet he owned the power of love, the spell would be broken and the anger of Aphrodite appeased. The song had been growing fainter and more distant, and its last strains were just dying away, when I felt a heavy grasp on my arm, and a rough voice saluted me with, "Hould up, sir! stiddy now! What's the matter wid yez, anyway?"

The clouds were gone, and I was standing, or rather reeling, in the hall of the hotel, with Mike, the night porter, supporting me in his arms, while doors, floor, chandelier, and staircase were dancing about me as wildly as the Hartz witches on Walpurgis night.

I have vague recollections of being put into a hack. Next morning I found myself on my own bed, entirely dressed, and with a raging headache. I could not explain what had happened in any satisfactory manner, and the mystery that surrounded this extraordinary woman was deepened. I would not think of it. I dared not. I would think only of her beauty and that she loved me. The ride home from the ball was never out of my thoughts, and I was filled with unholy

happiness ; but back of it all was a great anxiety, a vague uneasiness about I knew not what. This feeling grew constantly stronger as the day wore on, and by evening I was wild with nervousness. I went round to the hotel. I handed my card to the clerk to be sent up to her.

"Why, she's left the house, sir! Didn't you know it?" The blow had fallen. I felt what had come upon me. I understood that mysterious song. Never to see her again, but to love her with this mad, unholy love, until I should be consumed, body and soul, in the hell fires of my own passion!

I walked the streets all that night. Next morning I felt a little less hopeless. Perfectly reckless of exposure, making no secret of my great anxiety, I tried every method to gain information of her. Uselessly, of course. She had disappeared. By night the hopelessness had settled darker than ever upon my soul. I tried every excitement in my endeavors to conquer the horrible feeling. Absinthe, brandy, and opium combined to madden and stupefy me, but never for a moment could I forget. Weakened by dissipation, I felt that will and intellect were leaving me. I was glad. At last the end came. The curse was too heavy. Merely human faculties could not bear it and live. Brain-fever seized me. All I can remember is one long dream

of that woman's face, with deep blue eyes, and glowing lips ever near but ever eluding me, while the strains of that wild song were ever in my ears.

I have been told since that I was in my bed for weeks ; that when at last I was able to move about my rooms a little, old James, once my father's valet, now my mother's factotum, was sent for, and I was driven about under his charge ; and that one day, in the latter part of April, he and Berrian took me out for my first walk. There my memory comes back to me. Through all the clamor of that wild song I heard a soft voice say, " Poor fellow, it is so sad ! Mr. Berrian, you must give my best love to Jennie and Mrs. Graves, and tell them how sorry I am. I wish they'd let me come and see them." I was myself again. Instead of the haunting face of that beautiful fiend I saw where I was—no very romantic place, on the avenue in front of the Union League Club—I saw, too, a lovely girl, who looked at me with a divine pity in her brown eyes. She caught my gaze, blushed, and as she passed I heard her say, " Dear me ! I thought he never noticed anything."

I turned to Berrian, whom I saw alongside of me, with, " I say, Harry, who is that girl ?"

His reply was a shout, and then he took me in his arms and hugged me as if I were my sister.

I remember sapiently wondering how Berrian could possibly have become intoxicated so early in the day. He did not further answer my question, but taking me by one arm, while James seized the other, they marched me off between them.

"What's the matter with you two? Where are you taking me to?" I asked, weakly.

"To your mother. Here, James, you take care of him; I must run ahead and prepare her," and off he went.

I need not write how mother and Jennie received me. I had been dead, and was alive again. We passed a delightful evening together, all of them vying with each other in petting me. About nine my mother sent me to bed in a manner that made me feel exactly six years old. They had taken two rooms in my apartment house just across the passage from mine, and lived there all through my sickness. I came into my own room, and the sight of the familiar place brought everything back to me. The old misery was upon me again.

On the pedestal where Venus had stood was a photograph, a porcelain picture in a velvet frame. It was Gracie Carroll's, although at that time I did not know it. She had been a school friend of my sister's, had moved into town during my illness, and Jennie had placed the picture where

I found it. The face seemed familiar, and as I studied it I forgot Mrs. Hephæstus. At last I recognized the face of the girl who had spoken to Harry on the avenue. I wished he had told me who she was.

After that night I led my old life again, and though still haunted by the memory of Mrs. Hephæstus, it was only when I was alone in my room at night that the old passion could seize and master me. At such times I had but to take down Gracie Carroll's picture, and gazing at her sweet young face, I found strength to conquer my tormenting thoughts. I had found out who she was. I knew her; I saw her frequently. I felt that she helped me. Accidentally I discovered that she loved me. As I sat in my room that night thinking of her, and of her betrayed love for me, I remembered those words of the song of the Horæ, which had held out to me the hope of forgiveness. Gracie Carroll was fulfilling the prophecy. She pitied and loved me. After that I was constantly with her, loving her better and better every day. One night in June I asked her to be my wife, and as her innocent lips touched my own, the brand of Aphrodite's unholy caresses was effaced. The spell that had bound me so long was broken. One reason why I have described my acquaintance with Mrs. Hephæstus so badly is that since that white night

when Gracie kissed me first, I have never been able to express even to myself what my own feeling for that woman really was. It was too utterly unlike any passion that mere humanity is capable of, to be described in human language. On the night of the charity ball, and afterward down to the night of my release, I was a different man, with capacities for feeling, ideas of moral obligation, and passions that do not belong to my nature, that do not belong to humanity in its present stage of development. I say, as I have said before, that some demoniac influence was upon me—that I was possessed of a devil.

But the night that Gracie accepted me I went home my old self.

On the very next morning I recovered my bronze. I received a telegraphic despatch from my long-since-forgotten detective, requesting me to come to Police Headquarters at once. I went, and he greeted me in a state of exultation. My bronze had been recovered, and the thief had been arrested. "Officer Terry," he said, "saw him pick a lady's pocket, and chased him into a den in Baxter Street. Terry saw the bronze there, and told me. I know it's yours." After the story I have told, the reader may imagine that the detective was far more confident on this point than I could be. He took me to the prop-

erty clerk's room, and there indeed was my wonderful Venus.

How the sight of her scattered that fantastic fabric of dreams of which she had been the foundation ! The reader can readily guess some of the beliefs I had entertained regarding this figure, and here lay the angry goddess who had left Olympus to walk our modern earth, lying in the most helplessly undignified of positions amid a chaos of dusty boxes, shapeless bundles, and disreputable old clothes in the Mulberry Street police station.

So with the bronze restored to her pedestal this story ends. In October there is to be a supplement, that a fashionable engraver is getting up in the highest style of the art. Harry and Jennie, Gracie and I, have planned a double wedding.

THE CHILD OF THE REGIMENT.

I.

"O PAPA! Papa's tum back! Nellie found papa!"

The city is in tumult. The mob is up. A great riot is impending. The troops, suddenly called upon, are hastening to the armories. Amid a crowd of angry roughs stand, back to back, two soldiers. The elder, in a plain gray and black fatigue uniform, is Private Andrew McClane, head of the great "Swamp" firm of McClane & Westervelt. The one in the blue coat with double-barred shoulder-straps is Fred Westervelt, his junior partner and captain.

Captain Westervelt's face, spite of his blonde beard, is almost boyish. He is taking excellent care of himself with his light officer's sword. He seems rather to enjoy the situation.

Private McClane is middle-aged. His hair and whiskers are grizzled. He holds a revolver steadily pointed at the head of the rough nearest to him. He doesn't enjoy the situation at all,

and doesn't pretend to ; but there is a look about his mouth and eyes not pleasant to that rough.

Just then a blue-eyed baby-girl hugged the young officer's knees, and cried with childish triumph, "O papa ! Papa's tum back ! Nellie found papa !"

Then she made a desperate effort to climb up him.

Captain Westervelt was astonished. He was not the papa of any little girl at all, and even if he had been would hardly have expected her just then. The crowd was astonished, too. It stopped yelling.

"Look here, McClane !" said Captain Westervelt.

Mr. McClane did not look. He needed all his eyes for that nearest rough. He was a man who always attended strictly to business.

Then Captain Westervelt did a very silly, or, perhaps, a very wise thing. Leaving his sword to dangle from his wrist, he stooped and lifted little blue-eyes. She fairly screamed with delight, and clasped his neck with her tiny arms, as he said, quietly, to one of the roughs, a decent-looking fellow enough, now that he had given over howling bad language :

"Here, my man, just take the young one out of this, will you ? She may get hurt."

This rough had two little girls of his own.

They were in many ways like this little one. They had blue eyes; they looked hungry and uncared-for. Their thin faces and piteous cries for bread had helped make him a rioter. He was a man, although a rough.

So the man dropped a couple of bricks, and reached to take little Nellie.

She did not appreciate him. She cried, "Papa! papa! Make oogly man go 'way." She lost her little temper. She made such vindictive demonstrations with hands and feet toward the objectionable countenance, that the "oogly man," whose own little girls never treated him so, started backward, and catching his heels in his own bricks, fell among his companions in attitude undignified, and therein sat gaping.

The crowd, as one man, grinned. Mr. McClane lowered his revolver. He had smiled himself. He had seen that nearest rough laugh naturally. He did not feel so much like shooting that rough. He did not believe that rough felt quite so much like smashing him.

Perhaps he was right. We can never know, for just then something new happened.

Two young men were in the rear of the crowd. One was named Mike, one Jim.

Mike was there because he was a discontented brute. Jim, because he was good-natured and

easily led into mischief. Both were employed by McClane & Westervelt.

Said Jim, "Mike, it's the bosses there!"

"Faith, an' is it?"

"It is—shure the byes 'll kill 'em."

"Mebbe; I dunno."

"But, Mike, it'll stop the business; there's but the two of them intil it, and where would we get places?"

"You're right; bad's better than nothin'; yell the 'cops is comin'.'"

Then these two philanthropists cried, mightily, "Away wid yez, byes! Here's the perlice!" and ran.

The crowd fled, terror-stricken.

Mr. McClane drew a long breath of relief. "A narrow escape that, Fred!" said he. "Now, let's get to the armory."

"Very well. Now, little one, down you go," and Westervelt attempted to set the child on her feet; but she clung closely to him.

"Papa, tarry Nellie. Nellie s'eepy. Take Nellie to mamma," and she cuddled her curly head into his shoulder and closed her eyes.

"Come, Fred, put the child down, and let's be off! These fellows will be back."

"Just put my sword in the scabbard for me, will you, McClane? Thanks. Do you know, I don't see through this. What does the child

mean by calling me papa? And she seems so sure of it, too!"

"Think about that after we're in the armory. She probably belongs in one of these tenement-houses."

"She wasn't brought up in one, at any rate. Did you ever hear a tenement child say papa and mamma? And look at her hands—as delicate as a lady's."

"Oh, nonsense; do come along!"

"Not till I see her safe. I've a notion she saved our lives to-night. Where do you live, Nellie? Where's mamma? Why, she's asleep! Nellie! Nellie! Where do you live, Nellie?"

"Wiv mamma."

"And where's mamma?"

The child hesitated and thought deeply.

"Nellie know. Somevere. Don't 'oo know? Nassy place—not nice like home. Mamma sick, and lie down, and k'y, and k'y. Nellie hate it, and go out for papa. Now papa take Nellie and mamma home 'dain," and she dropped off contentedly to sleep.

"Well, Fred, you've your hands full. Come, man! You must get to the armory. What will the colonel say? Riot duty, too."

"Come on, then."

"But the child—"

"Comes with us. There's no finding out

where she lives, and if you think I'm going to leave this little innocent in the streets to-night—"

"But, my dear boy—"

Westervelt laughed. "Will you please remember we're in uniform, Private McClane. Forward, march!" And he stepped rapidly off.

McClane followed him, silent, but much perturbed in mind—digesting chaff in anticipation.

II.

THE scene at the armory that night was an exciting one. The great building was lighted brilliantly. A mob more curious and noisy than actually riotous thronged about the entrance, where was posted a strong guard, with bayonets fixed. Members of the regiment were constantly arriving and making their way in amid a chorus of hooting and hisses. Every few minutes a cab would dash up, disgorge gray-coated soldiers, and away again as fast as whip could urge.

Now four hacks arrive together. A blue-coated officer leaps from the foremost, and shouts loudly for the guard. A strong detachment rushes down the steps, the crowd is pressed back; and while the carriages are surrounded by a line of steel a fatigue party hastily empties them, and

carries their contents—heavy chests—indoors. It is fixed ammunition from the State Arsenal.

Within is chaos come again—men napping, or trying to; men shouting; men singing; men quietly chatting; men skylarking roughly, but all in the gray uniform, all with knapsacks packed and overcoats rolled, all ready at the sergeant's call to spring for their rifles and "fall in."

Into this scene Captain Westervelt carried little Nellie, soundly sleeping on his arm. The guard stared, presented arms, and wondered dumbly, being on duty. The gray-coated throng within stared, saluted, and wondered noisily, not being on duty.

A torrent of questions and remarks poured upon McClane as he pushed his way to his company room, silent and trying to look unconscious.

"Who is she?"

"Where did you win her?"

"A new doll for the squad."

"K Co.'s vivandière! turn out the guard!" etc., etc.

Meanwhile Westervelt had reached the cosey room, where stood the colonel amid a group of his officers.

He saluted with his left hand. The colonel returned his salute, and stared in blank amaze.

"What on earth are you doing with that child?"

Before Westervelt could reply Nellie woke. She gazed around her, bewildered and frightened by so many strange faces. She looked to "papa" for comfort. No comfort was there; it was not "papa" at all.

The blue eyes dilated with fear; the rosy lips trembled; a piteous look came over the baby's face as she cried, "Mamma! mamma! Me want mamma! 'Oo not my papa. Bad man! Bad man! 'Oo dot papa's tose on! 'Oo not papa!" and she fought and struggled to get free, screaming.

A curious throng had gathered in the hall. "Close that door!" shouted the colonel. "Give me the child, Westervelt. She will be in convulsions;" and it was a touching sight to see the gray-bearded officer tenderly comforting the heart-broken baby. He had a little girl at home, and experience. Finally he set her down in a corner, quiet, and contentedly playing with his dress epaulettes and gorget.

"Oh, pitty, pitty!" cried she, and forgot everything else for the moment.

Then Westervelt told his story: how the little creature had run to him through the crowd, and so probably saved his life. He dwelt especially upon her calling him "papa."

"What's her name, Westervelt?"

Little pitchers have big ears, also fluent lips. She spoke up for herself: "Me Helen Tlay Fweeman, mamma's booty, papa's pet."

Her voice was clear. Every one heard her. Every one exclaimed in surprise:

"Helen Clay Freeman! Can she be Clay Freeman's child?"

"And did your papa wear these clothes?" asked Westervelt, eagerly, beginning to understand.

"Ess, lots of times. Oost to wear 'em, and do out and be soger man."

Little doubt now why she had called him papa. Only a year ago Captain Clay Freeman had been the most popular officer in that regiment; but even Westervelt, then his lieutenant, who had of them all been most intimate with him, knew almost nothing of Freeman's home-life. One day the regiment took part in that most nonsensical of military exhibitions—a sham fight. It was in mid-July, the most sultry day of the season. The men were in their heavy uniforms and were loaded with packed knapsacks, haversacks, and canteens, because the commanding general thought it looked so much more like real service. Much he knew about it!

The general sat his horse surrounded by his

staff—in the shade; the men marched and counter-marched, loaded and fired—in the sun.

Cannon roared, rifles cracked, white smoke rolled over the plain; almost every moment some man staggered, dropped, and was carried to the rear on a stretcher—a real, true stretcher—to be attended to by the surgeons in a real, true field hospital.

The general was delighted. His face glowed with pride. "Glorious!" said he. "I have never seen anything look so much like real service."

It was true; he never had.

One or two of his staff had the advantage of him in this, but military etiquette kept them silent.

Up came a gray-headed, keen-eyed man, the surgeon of our regiment. He was a doctor, not a soldier. He neither knew nor cared much about military etiquette, but he knew a great deal about sunstroke and its effects.

Without even saluting he blurted out:

"General, this is horrible—murderous!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean this. You have about two thousand men out there. In the last twenty minutes more than one hundred of them have been brought in prostrated by the heat. This must be stopped."

The general gasped, "Return to your post, sir. I'll have you court-martialled."

"Pooh!" said the doctor; "you know what you're doing now, and I'll have *you* indicted for manslaughter."

"Consider yourself under arrest; your sword, sir!" (The doctor wore none, but this sounded like "real service.")

"Bosh!" said the doctor, and went back to his work.

The general nearly fainted. But one or two of his staff who *had* seen "real service," and so knew where the bounds of military etiquette ended, said some very plain words to him, and soon aides-de-camp were galloping in every direction; the firing ceased, the ranks were broken, and the sham fight was over.

In twenty minutes, out of two thousand men engaged, one hundred and twenty had fallen, overcome by the heat.

Among them was Nellie's father. A few days afterward he was dead of brain-fever.

All his brother officers and the members of his company attended the funeral. They passed resolutions, had them suitably engrossed and sent to the "family of the deceased," they wore the "usual badge of mourning for thirty days," and often thought and spoke of their dead comrade with loving sorrow. What more could they do? How were they to know that Clay Freeman, who had lived well, dressed well, spent

freely, and never borrowed, had died penniless? How were they to know that his widow and orphan stood alone in the world, their bread to be earned by two white, jewelled hands untrained to produce aught more useful than South Kensington embroidery and imitation Haviland faïence.

The jewels first, the hands afterward, had earned bread, and little besides, for nearly a year; but sickness came, and on the afternoon that Clay Freeman's "baby Nell" had run out in the squalid street and lost herself, "looking for papa," Clay Freeman's girl widow lay dying in the meanest room of a mean tenement-house, attended only by a charitable physician and a good-natured Irish washerwoman, her next-door neighbor; and while the child played with the colonel's gorget, the mother died.

They did not know this. So the colonel said softly—for though it was but a baby, he was a gentleman, "Strange, how poverty-stricken the little thing looks! Freeman died well off, didn't he?"

Nobody knew. Pretty as she was, she did look ragged, dirty, neglected. A strange feeling of self-reproach came over them all.

Westervelt answered, "Upon my word, I don't know. Odd, isn't it, how little we all do know of each other outside the regiment?"

Just then our poor little heroine began to cry. The glittering playthings had lost their charm. She was lonely, and wanted her mamma. She was hungry, and wanted her supper. She had been naughty, and knew it. So she wailed. They all gathered around her, greatly concerned, but decidedly helpless.

Even the colonel looked embarrassed.

"Gentlemen," said he, "perhaps you had better be looking after your men. I shall be here if anything new turns up. Westervelt, send Lewis here, will you?"

The officers took the hint, saluted and departed, spreading the story as they went.

Then the colonel tip-toed to his door, and locked it. He went to little Nellie, who by this time was fairly roaring. He kissed and soothed her; she stopped roaring, and cried; then he took her in his arms and walked up and down, dandling her; she stopped crying, and only sobbed. At last, I am almost ashamed to say, he set her on his shoulder, high in the air, and pranced her about the room until she laughed again. This *was* like papa.

A knock. The colonel went to the door. Before turning the key he asked, cautiously, "That you, Lewis?"

"Yes, sah."

Lewis slipped in and shut the door quickly be-

hind him, but not quickly enough to prevent the colonel seeing a throng of gray jackets in the broad corridor, nor their wearers from seeing him with the child on his shoulder.

Then through the closed door came a roar of manly voices.

"Three cheers for the colonel!"

"Who was Colonel Craig?"

"First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen," two hundred voices chorused in response, and four hundred heavy boots echoed on the sounding floor something that sounded like thunder set to this metre: Bang! Bangitty-bang-bang! Bang-bang—BANG!

"Nice discipline!" said the colonel, and blushed. Lewis was the colonel's servant.

"Lewis," said his master, "this little girl is Nellie Freeman. Nellie, Lewis loves little girls, and he will get you some nice supper. Will Nellie go to him?"

Lewis held out his arms. Nellie's own "mammy" in the old days had been as black as Lewis; "supper" sounded very comfortable; and Nellie had made up her small mind that everybody in this place, which was not "nassy," were "dood peoples."

So she said, "Ess, me do!" And Lewis took her, while the colonel went on:

"We think she must be Captain Freeman's lit-

tle girl. Captain Westervelt found her lost on the street, and brought her here. We can't find out where she lives ; her mother will be wild with anxiety ; and what to do I don't know."

"Tell you, Mars' Craig," said Lewis, "lots o' dem newspaper fellers round to-night. You tell some ob dem fellers, and dey have it all out to-morrow mornin'. Dat's de plan. To-night I take care ob her. Take her upstairs to de small drill-room next de kitchen. Get her good supper, make up bed, and let her sleep dere till mamma come for her. How dat, Nellie ? Better fix her up lily bit fust, Mars' Craig."

"Very well, Lewis ; see that you take good care of her ;" and the colonel turned to his desk, while Lewis took Nellie to the basin, washed her face and hands, and combed and arranged her curling, golden hair.

True to his race, he had an eye for artistic effect. He took from a locker two small silk flags ; one he twisted about her shoulders and with the other concealed her soiled and ragged skirt. She made a beautiful little Goddess of Liberty, perched on Lewis's shoulder, as he bore her into the crowded hall.

Every one in the regiment had heard the story by this time. They thronged around Lewis.

"Three cheers for the baby !" shouted one.

"Stop that, men !" called out Captain Wes-

tervelt, sharply. "Don't frighten the child. Let Lewis pass!"

They fell back quietly, and Nellie wasn't frightened at all. She loved "soger men," and these were such "nice soger men;" true, they didn't have "duns," which was a drawback, but they were smiling and kissing their hands to her and calling out pleasant greetings fitted for baby ears. Nellie thought it just lovely.

She laughed and threw kisses to them as she passed, and with her bright face and brilliant dress she looked such a happy, pleasant picture, that the men were delighted with her.

"Fall in, boys!" shouted some one, and in a moment the long column was formed, the steady tramp of marching feet was heard, and Nellie was escorted to "de small drill-room next de kitchen"—henceforth to be known as "the nursery"—with full military honors.

Here, seated on two knapsacks laid one upon the other, with a drum for a table, Nellie took her supper—fresh bread, plenty of milk, and a few strawberries. She enjoyed it thoroughly; but as the men would talk to her, of course she had to talk to them, and all her remarks being loudly applauded and admiringly repeated, she talked a great deal. So the supper took a long time to finish.

At last, with a little sigh of contentment, she signified that she had enough.

Lewis suggested bed. Bedding was very scarce, but half a dozen settee cushions made a mattress, a loosely-rolled overcoat did duty as a pillow, and others served for coverlets. It was not much of a bed, but it was the best in the armory that night.

Nellie was too sleepy even to wonder at such a funny crib, or to think it strange that she should go to bed all dressed; but when Lewis said, "Now, Nellie, go to sleep like a good little girl till mamma comes," she looked at him wonderingly.

"Must say my prayers first."

She knelt down and repeated her simple prayer. The room had been noisy enough with the jokes and laughter of the men, but now every cap was off, and they stood silent and reverent until the gentle little voice was hushed.

"Dood-night, Lewis," said she, and put up her little mouth for a kiss. He laid her on her funny-looking bed, covered her tenderly, and whispered, "Say good-night to de gemmen, Miss Nellie."

"Dood-night, ev'ybody," she murmured, sleepily.

"Good-night, baby, good-night, little one," they replied, each using his own home formula.

The child's blue eyes closed. She turned her face away from the light, and, worn out at last

with excitement, almost instantly was sound asleep.

The men still lingered, watching the pretty sight, and Lewis had to say :

"Gemmen, must ask you to go now. Got to put de gas out. Colonel's orders, gemmen."

So they left at last, but some one struck up, "How can I bear to leave thee." All joined in, and softly and sweetly the beautiful harmony floated through the sounding halls, as the men went quietly away. Noise enough and to spare there was in the armory that night, but in the darkened room where Nellie slept, watched by faithful Lewis, all was still ; while in the hall paced a sentinel, posted there by the colonel's order, specially instructed to warn away intruders and check all noise that might disturb her slumbers.

So, safe and warm, guarded like a princess, the little orphan waif dreamed away the dark hours before dawn.

III.

THE colonel had adopted Lewis's sensible suggestion.

Reporters were numerous in the armory that night ; all were glad to get such an item ; and by daylight the papers were spreading the story of how little Nellie had been found, who she

was, and where she was. Alas! the eyes that most of all would have been gladdened by the reading were closed in death.

But the good doctor, who at the last had learned much of the story of his beautiful and refined "charity patient," saw the account in his morning paper. He had been very anxious for the child, and had done all he could—which in the disturbed state of the city was but little—to find her; so he went immediately to the armory. Stating his name and business, he was immediately passed, and the corporal of the guard took him to the colonel.

"Colonel Craig," said he, "I am Doctor Wentworth. I saw in the paper that you had little Nellie Freeman here, and I have come to look after her."

"Very glad to see you, doctor; take a seat, won't you? Yes, the little thing's here, safe and well. She's holding a reception in the main drill-room just now. I suppose her mother will be here soon to take her home; but how she is to get her away from the men I can't say."

"Poor little thing! I fear she has no home. Her mother died at six last night. I attended her. She was evidently a lady born, but she died of starvation, colonel, in one of the lowest tenement-houses I ever entered. Before she died she told me a sad story of misfortune and want.

Why, her husband was Clay Freeman, an officer of your own regiment!"

The colonel's face was very sad. "I knew that, doctor. But the mother dead! Terrible! How this miserable thing happened I don't know, but it is a shame to the regiment." He thought a moment. "Doctor, will you tell this to my officers?" Then to his orderly: "Ask the officers, as many as you can find, to come here at once."

Soon the room filled; nearly every officer in the regiment hastened there, for important news from headquarters was expected every moment.

The colonel spoke.

"Gentlemen, you all knew Clay Freeman. The little girl, as we supposed, is his child. Her mother died last night. This is Doctor Wentworth, who attended her. He will tell you how she died."

The doctor, who guessed the colonel's thought, told the sad story simply but very movingly. The officers looked grave.

The colonel went on: "I will tell you how I feel about this, and I believe you all feel as I do. You know what Freeman was; and I say it is a burning disgrace to us that we, his brother officers, have not thought enough, not cared enough, to save our friend's widow from such wretchedness. It is too late to do much now.

But what amends we can make we must make, if only for our own sakes; his child is left, you know."

"Leave her to me, colonel," cried out Westervelt. "My sister—"

"No, Westervelt; this is a matter for us all."

Many plans were proposed. Finally Major Strong, who had stood silent all this time, spoke.

"Well, colonel, I think you can see we're all in with you; but I don't like altogether any of the propositions. We can easily raise plenty of money to assure the child's future—but what's that? I want every man in this regiment to be interested in her, to often see her, and to remember the lesson this bad business teaches us. My notion is this: let the dues of every man be increased by two dollars a year, with their consent, of course—there'll be no trouble about that, except they won't think it's enough—to be used for the child. That will give her a sure income, which cannot possibly fail of nearly two thousand a year. Let us adopt her as the child of the whole regiment, and give her not only money, but nine hundred fathers to love her and look out for her."

"The best plan, I think," spoke the colonel; and it was at once adopted.

Westervelt had been quietly moving around among his brother officers, and now, laying a

roll of bills before the colonel, he whispered something in his ear.

"Thank you, Westervelt; I had forgotten."

"Doctor," said he, "you see how we all feel about this. Now will you do us all a favor? Will you take this money, and make arrangements for this poor lady's funeral? You know how we would wish it to be. You see, we may not be able to leave our duty here to-day or to-morrow, and need a friend. Will you oblige us?"

"Indeed I will, colonel. Rely on me. Everything shall be as her dearest friends could wish. I suppose I had better take the little girl with me until you can make your arrangements."

"I hate to lose her. She is like a sunbeam in the armory just now. But I suppose we can't keep her here very well. Go and fetch her, Westervelt."

Just then an orderly from headquarters hastily entered, and, saluting, handed a folded paper to the colonel.

"Orders at last," they all thought, and Westervelt paused at the door.

The colonel hastily glanced over the paper. His eye flashed.

"Gentlemen," said he, "we are ordered to form in readiness to march out. We can expect further orders by eleven. Get your men together; the assembly will be sounded in ten minutes."

The officers were hastening to their posts when Major Strong called out quickly, "One moment! Excuse me, colonel, can't we put this matter of the child before the men at once, after they're formed, and get it settled?"

"Very well, major, I will attend to it. Can you wait a short time, doctor? You can take Nellie with you after we march out." The doctor assented willingly.

In a moment cheers were ringing in every part of the armory, as the men learned that "orders had come," and ran to their company-rooms, buttoning jackets and fastening body-belts as they ran. Then the sharp roll of the drums made the walls resound till the shouts of the sergeants' "Fall in, men! fall in!" could scarcely be heard. Lewis had just time to carry little Nellie, almost as excited as the men, although she did not know at what, to one of the galleries, where she could see everything.

By the time she reached it the armory was silent, and the men, with their glittering rifles, were formed in long lines in the large drill-room. Nellie clapped her hands with delight. They had their "duns" at last. She listened to every order and watched every movement.

She thought it was all for her amusement, for had not these "nice sogers" been promising all morning that they would march for her soon?

She only missed the music. Soon the companies were formed, the ranks were opened, and every man received his forty rounds of ball cartridges. Then the first sergeant's call was sounded, the details made, and the companies equalized.

A few manœuvres and regimental front was formed, entirely occupying the length of the immense room. The adjutant turned the regiment over to the colonel.

"Battalion, load!" Down came the glittering line of steel—click, click, click! A pause—clang!

Nine hundred breechblocks closed, and nine hundred rifles were ready for rioters.

"Carry arms!"—click, click, as the hammers were brought to the half-cock. And the rifles are again perpendicular and motionless.

The colonel spoke. "Men, we shall march out in less than an hour. I trust you to do your duty. Above all, be attentive and prompt. Keep cool, don't get excited, don't fire without orders. That is all I have to say to you. Remember it. Before we go I wish to speak to you of a very sad affair. You all remember Captain Freeman? You remember how he died. His widow died last night in poverty and misery, without a friend, without a dollar. Think of it, men! Think of it! Clay Freeman's widow dying of hunger on a bed off which the very blankets had been pawned. The little girl that Captain Westervelt

brought in last night is Clay Freeman's only child. She is altogether an orphan and utterly destitute. Is there not something for us to do here? Is it not our duty to do something?"

Then he told them in a few words the plan the officers had agreed upon.

"Now all those of you who are willing to be bound by this—and remember there is more than a mere question of money involved—will at the word 'March!' step two paces to the front. Those who are not willing stand fast.

"Two paces to the front—march!"

Tramp! tramp! tramp! As one man the whole regiment moved forward.

The colonel's eyes moistened. Perhaps that was the reason the line seemed a little unsteady. He knew what the men wanted.

"In place—rest!" he commanded.

"Three cheers for our little girl — three cheers for the daughter of the regiment!" And how they did cheer! "Bring her down, colonel; introduce her," they shouted. The colonel laughed and motioned to Lewis. He led Nellie by the hand to the colonel, who, as he stooped to kiss her, took his own regimental badge from his coat and pinned it on her poor little frock, where, as he raised her high for all to see, it glittered proudly—a pledge of safety, peace, and joy to the deserted little one for all her coming life.

"Cheer your fill, boys; no danger of frightening those brave blue eyes that glance so proudly down your line. She is yours by birth as well as by adoption—the child of the regiment. She knows it and feels it as well as you do. Baby though she is, she is one of you; the regimental spirit is in her and will never leave her."

"Bring her to us, colonel; let us have her!"

The colonel felt as strongly as any of them. He led her to the right of the regiment, while the drum corps sounded three ruffles in her honor, and the colors dipped. It was a great sight as she was passed from man to man down that line. Even *their* discipline could hardly keep them in their places. They kissed her, they raised her high in their arms. Officers as they held her up shouted, "Look at her men; ours, remember!"

Exciting it was; but she through it all kept her bright, steadfast look, as if to say, "I trust you all; I love you all; we belong to each other." She felt it, though as the colonel bore her away her baby lips could find no words; she only sighed softly, and then—"Now me do tell mamma." The colonel's heart sank.

He gave her to Doctor Wentworth, saying, "I am afraid all this is very silly, doctor, and bad for Nellie; but I could not help it. Riot duty

always makes the men a little wild, and she is so brave and pretty." The doctor smiled.

"No harm done, colonel. Look at her—a perfect little Joan of Arc. I believe she'd go with you and never wince for the firing. Leave her to me; and, colonel, I'm not given to sentiment, but there's my hand, and God bless you and your regiment."

At this moment the orders to march out were handed Colonel Craig. He thrust the paper through his sword-belt as he moved to the front and centre. All saw it, guessed what it was, and were just ready to cheer again when—

"Battalion—attention!" rang out. "Carry arms! Right shoulder arms! Column of fours —fours right—march!" And with that the long line filed out to the fight, while Nellie watched them and waved farewells from the doctor's arms.

And so the story comes to an end, for you can guess without my telling how the poor mother, who had starved herself to feed her child, was laid to her rest beside her dead husband by the reverent hands of his self-reproaching comrades; and how Nellie, while she never forgot her dear mother, learned to forget her grief.

There came near being a quarrel between the officers' wives as to who should have immediate care of her, but Mrs. Craig settled that by the

exercise of her prerogative, and took her to her own home.

The regiment never neglected the promise given on the day of the great riot.

How proud they were of her! How they bored everybody with stories of the charms and perfections of "our daughter!" How they watched her as she grew up into a beautiful, cultivated, high-souled woman! And what anxiety there was when, through the colonel, she dutifully asked the regiment's consent to her marriage! They gave it at last, after such an examination of the young man's character, position, and prospects as no bridegroom ever underwent before.

Then, as they could do no more for her, they gave her up with such a dower as caused both her and her husband to remonstrate with the greatest vigor, and not the least effect.

She never forgot the regiment. Its badge glittered among the laces and orange blossoms of her wedding dress. She has never lost the *esprit du corps*, the regimental feeling. In loyalty, truth, honor, and courage, in every best sense, she is still "the child of the regiment."

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

I AND my grandson Teddy live in the queerest house in New York.

It stands, and has stood for near two hundred years, by the Hudson River, in an old-fashioned garden, completely shut in by a high board fence. Outside are cobble-stones, railway-tracks, liquor-shops, noise, dirt, freight-cars, grain-elevators, and like abominations. Within are fruit-trees, tangled grass, shady walks, flowers, birds'-nests, sunlight and shadow, peace and quietness.

The house is of small Dutch bricks—all chimneys, gables, and weather-vanes, cosey corners and big fireplaces.

Almost anything can happen in such a house. It cannot catch fire from a furnace flue; nor poison you with escaping gas; nor is the fever "laid on" through pipes. It has none of the "modern conveniences." But I love it, and am sad at parting with it. You see I am poor—land-poor, if you know what that means. I can get a great deal of money for the old place, and it is

not fair to Ted to bring him up here, and so change him from a bright, ambitious boy to a dreamy, useless, land-poor old man.

My friends tell me this. I could never have thought it out for myself. They are business men ; they keep up with the spirit of the age. I knew nothing of this spirit, but conceived him to be a fast one, there seems to be so much merit in keeping up with him.

I have to maintain—or is it retain—a lawyer. He says unpleasant things to me, for which I pay him. He has been particularly disagreeable about selling this old place, until I could not bear it any longer, and told him to do as he thought best. He has done so ; and lately he told me that all was settled, and that I must be prepared to move out at the end of this month. I told him I would not. He merely laughed, and said he supposed they would have to carry me. That may happen : I am a very old man and far from well.

That evening I was sitting with my wood-fire, which was much the more cheerful of us two, when old Phineas entered the room. He is our servant. I wonder what will become of old Phineas after the end of the month. He said a gentleman wished to see me on business.

I did not feel like seeing any one, but I told Phineas to place a decanter of wine and some

biscuits on the table, and show the gentleman in.

He was the strangest-looking person I have ever seen. He was very tall, very slight, very pale; he had a few light hairs on his upper lip; he wore a black dress-coat, a waistcoat cut very low, and small-clothes fitting closely; about his throat was an extremely high and stiff band of white linen; his light hair was not parted, but brushed in a fringe straight across his forehead, like that of the children of the martyr Charles, as portrayed by Sir Anthony Van Dyke.

"Aw," he said, "Mistaw Ventnaw, I pwesume ?"

"At your service, sir. Be seated, pray."

"Thanks, awfully! But cawn't, when I'm—aw—dwessed. Won't detain you a moment. I am a spiwit."

"The Spirit of the Age, perhaps ?" I suggested, courteously.

"Aw—not at all. No connection whatevaw. I mean a faiwy—I am a faiwy—the king of the Manhattan faiwies."

Now this I could *not* put up with. I had not seen any fairies since my childhood, but I remembered their looks perfectly. This person was evidently an impostor. I was really obliged to say, although it was not true,

"I don't believe in fairies, sir."

"*You* don't believe in faiwies! Well, I am—aw—suppwised and disappointed. Do you believe you have a—aw—bald head, fowah instance?"

"Certainly I do, sir," I answered, more sharply than I should, for, after all, he was under my roof.

"Why?"

"Because I can feel it, sir; and see—well—I can see it reflected in the glass."

"Vewy well—you can feel me, and if you look in the mantel miwwah you will see my weflection. Will that convince you?"

Now this was very great nonsense. I fairly lost my temper.

"Let us have no more of this foolery, sir; be good enough to state your business."

He mused: "This is vewy stwange; not convinced by his own tests. Nevah saw such a queeah old chappy. Ah you--aw—nehvous?"

"Not at all, sir; not at all."

"Suah?"

"Yes, sir; sure."

"Vewy well, then. Heah goes."

He disappeared. I am *not* nervous, but I was surprised—any one would have been. A gruff, tiny voice reached my ear from the chimney-piece behind me.

"Look, Reginald, and be convinced." I

turned ; before me on a match-safe made of a brick taken from the old Stadt-huys sat a strange little figure—a fairy, I knew at once, and was at ease, much more so than I had ever been with my lawyer or with my business acquaintances. His face was round and jolly ; he wore a steeple-crowned hat, and a doublet of brown stuff fastened about his waist by a leather belt with a large flat buckle ; his breeches were very wide, and gathered at the knee with knots of ribbon ; he had on gray knit woollen stockings, and low-quartered, square-toed shoes. He was smoking a long pipe : he regarded me sternly.

" Reginald Ventnor, for years you have been our trusted favorite, the only man in this great city who has kept one spot free for our habitation, the only one to whom we could appear, to whom we were a reality, and all mortals shadows. For years we have rewarded you, keeping this house full of pleasant dreams ; now you have betrayed us, you have given yourself over to our mortal foe, the Spirit of the Age ; you are about to sell our domain to his myrmidons. Forbear, wretch, and tremble !"

Now I did not like being called a wretch and told to tremble by a person less than four inches in height, nor did I relish other portions of the royal speech. " *All* mortals shadows" indeed !

I think more of Ted than of all the fays that ever danced in moonlight.

So I seated myself calmly in my easy-chair, and answered,

"I will *not* tremble."

"You decline to tremble? This is very extraordinary conduct, but you *must*, you know. I don't see how we are to get on at all unless you tremble. Proceed to tremble!" He paused. "Well, then, base worm, learn thy fate. To-night our bodyguard, headed by our royal self, will seize and bear you to our royal dungeons—no, our royal dungeons are not large enough; we will torture you here. You shall be pinched, miscreant; our royal spiders shall poison you; our royal wasps shall sting you; our—well, in short, we will make it extremely unpleasant for you. Tremble, slave!"

"If you attempt anything of the sort I shall simply hand you over to the police."

He looked at me doubtfully.

"Why, aren't you afraid at all?"

"Afraid! Of *you!* Pooh, pooh, sir!"

"You might say 'your majesty,'" he suggested; "'Pooh, pooh, your majesty!' would be much more respectful."

"Not at all," I insisted, "not at all. In fact, we have had quite too much of 'our royal self,' and 'miscreants' and 'slaves,' and 'worms;' I

really must insist that you cease this sort of language at once; it is in exceedingly bad taste. I am more than willing to talk with you, but it must be on an equal footing; you must be content to speak and act simply as a private gentleman."

"I did just now," he said, apparently much aggrieved, "and you didn't treat me well at all; you doubted my word."

"I don't understand you."

"Why, ten minutes ago, when I first came in—didn't I talk and act like a gentleman then, before you made me take my proper shape?"

"So, it *was* you? I suspected so, but really, I cannot stretch courtesy so far as to tell you that you then at all resembled a gentleman; you were a ludicrous though pitiable object."

"Was I really all that? Do you know, I am greatly disappointed. My son, Prince Petrus, goes about a great deal in society, and I borrowed his best evening appearance especially for this visit. You see, I didn't wish to startle you by appearing in my own majestic person, and besides, I wanted to avoid the necessity of keeping up my royal manner. It is a great trial for me. I am aware that I do it very badly, though I practise faithfully. I am a Dutch fairy, not like those high-flying fellows about Cro'nest you read of in poetry. We are very plain, unassuming

fairies, and as a rule don't put on airs, but this was rather an important occasion, and I feared I would have to keep up appearances. Really, I am very glad you broke in as you did, I couldn't have kept it up much longer. Now let's talk sense," and he crossed his legs comfortably; "it won't do, Ventnor, my dear boy, it won't do."

"I do not exactly catch your meaning. *What* won't do?"

"Why, selling our domain over our head, you know. It will drive you out as well as us, and you will be just as miserable as we. What's the use, now?"

I told him as well as I could what my lawyer had said. He pondered deeply.

"I see the Spirit of the Age in this. Yes, it's clear this is some of his work; however, I'll deal fairly by you. Come, now, drop this project, refuse to sell the dear old place, and I will pay you twice the price you have agreed upon, whatever it may be."

It was a dazzling prospect. Talk about fairies being unbusiness-like, indeed! But I was obliged to be careful.

"That might suit very well indeed, but I won't take *fairy* gold."

"Of course not; I shan't ask you to take fairy *gold*, but you won't object to current money."

"Our ordinary money, of course not."

"Who said anything about *your* money? who ever heard of paying a man his own money? In *our* money, of course."

"I mean in money as good as ours."

"Oh, I see. Why, of course it's as good; not quite the *same*, to be sure. Yours is made of rags and ours of leaves, but they're both green and they're both circulating medium. We use box-leaves mostly. They wear best, and there are no end of them in the garden; besides, we can get them in winter, which prevents stringency."

"But will it buy anything?"

"I don't know that it will buy *any* thing. That depends on how much you have of it, and on rates of exchange and tariff, and quotations, and moving crops and things. If you don't care for so much idle capital, and would rather have a sound investment, there are the shares of our new aërial railroad, chartered by King Oberon. I don't know so much about it, but Petrus is president, secretary, treasurer, and board of directors. He has sold me quite a lot of the stocks. I understand they are very good stocks indeed."

It sounded well, but I was so—if I may use the phrase—taken aback by hearing the king talk so much like my business friends that I could only murmur,

"I must really refer you to Mr. Sharpman. Here is his card; you had better see him."

Mr. Sharpman is my lawyer. He has told me to say that to every one who tries to talk business with me.

The fairy king grew very red in the face. He took off his hat and kicked it almost to the other end of the chimney-piece; he threw down his pipe, and stamped on it; he strode up and down, muttering,

"You are the most impracticable old—person," at last he broke out, "I ever had to deal with. Who ever heard of a mortal referring a fairy to his lawyer? Did Cinderella refer her godmother to *her* lawyer? did Arthur refer Morgan le Fay to his? did Huon of Bordeaux refer Oberon to his? Bah! I am ashamed of you! But you're not serious."

I was not only serious, but angry; so I replied, "I have nothing further to say; either talk with Mr. Sharpman or drop the negotiation."

"Nonsense! I can see *him* easily enough, but how do you suppose *he* is going to see *me?* Lawyers can't see fairies. But you *are* in earnest, strong in blind obstinacy, that last refuge of a weak nature. Nothing can prevail against it. I will strive no more. We will go; the fairies who, despite the Spirit of the Age, have lingered on Manhattan Island, must leave it now. We go

to mingle with the elements, for beyond the limits of this island we have no place. Think not I blame you, Reginald, you are but an instrument; but you have driven from New York the last of its fairies, the last of its harmless romance, the last remnant of its childhood; perhaps it is as well. Few have known us, none will mourn us, there is none to write our story, no poet to sing our homely legends; even the children know us not. Farewell!"

The sad little king waved his hand to me and grew dim and faint. I felt very, very sorry for him, and called out,

"Stay, I was hasty; let us talk further."

He grew distinct again, and seated himself quite cheerfully on the Stadt-huys brick.

"You have changed your mind?"

"Hardly that, but I would justify myself. Believe me, if only I were concerned I would never change the old, pleasant order; but Ted—I must think of him and his future."

The fairy's face brightened as he said, quickly,

"My dear sir, I honor you for the thought. Of course Ted must be consulted. Let us leave it to Ted. That's fair, I'm sure. Call the child in."

"But will *he* be able to see and hear you?"

"I think so, I think so," he deliberated; "let's see, how old is he now?"

"About thirteen," I answered, after a little comparison of dates.

"Reads a good deal?"

"A *great* deal."

"Mostly your books, I suppose? Is with you constantly, eh?"

"Yes, indeed, he loves to be with and talk with me."

"He'll do! he'll do!" he shouted, gleefully. "We'll have him in. But first I must instruct you a little in the natural history of fairies. You see, we are creatures of the ——, or rather—well, you know if you want to see a fairy you've got to imagine, that's part of the process. We are ready to do our part for the right sort of people, but we can't imagine for them. You admit that, of course; now, no doubt Ted will imagine hard enough, but the point is he may imagine wrong. Likely as not, instead of seeing me as I *am* he will compel me to appear to him as one of those nonsensical dandies up the river, or a court fellow from a wood near Athens. That will be confusing and wearing on *me*. I assure you it's extremely hard to appear twice at once—you understand me? Now suppose we call him in."

I went to the door and called "Ted!"

"Here I am, grandfather;" and I heard his rapid steps on the polished floor of the hall.

Ted, a by-name for Theodore, is the hand-

somest, brightest, cleverest boy in New York. I have the greatest respect for his opinions. As he entered the room, his curly locks tumbled, his bright eyes beaming with life and intelligence, I felt that I could leave the question to him with perfect ease of mind.

"Well, Ted, what have you been reading to-night?" I asked, as I laid my hand on his head.

"'Knickerbocker' again, grandfather. Isn't it first-rate?"

The fairy nodded his head and rubbed his hands in gleeful satisfaction.

"Did you ever see a fairy, Ted?"

He blushed and laughed.

"Yes, grandfather, lots of them, when I have been reading in the garden."

"Would you like to see one now?"

"Indeed I would; are you going to tell me a story?"

"No, Ted. There is a fairy in the room now—the king of the New York fairies. I have had a long talk with him on a matter of business; we do not agree, and have decided to submit the question to you."

Ted looked frightened. "Make him imagine! make him imagine!" whispered the fairy; so I went on:

"Now, Ted, all you've to do is to imagine, but you must imagine right. This is a Dutch fairy;"

and I described the fairy king fully to Ted, and told him just where his majesty was sitting.

"Now, shut your eyes and imagine as severely as possible."

I was disappointed in Ted. He did not appear in the least excited or pleased. After one quick glance at the match-safe he did not take his eyes off me, and to my astonishment, almost anger, said,

"Let me call Phineas, grandfather."

The fairy shook his head in violent negation.

"No! no!" I cried. "Do as I tell you; shut your eyes and imagine at once."

He obeyed. He closed his eyes; he seemed to be imagining deeply.

"Do you think you can see him now?" I asked, anxiously. He nodded assent, opened his eyes, and looked at me.

"Look at the mantel, Ted! Look at the match-safe!"

He obeyed. "I see him," he said; "oh, yes, grandfather, I do see him." Again he looked at me: he was pale, and his eyes were frightened. It *was* a shock, no doubt. I glanced at the fairy triumphantly, but he looked doubtful and uneasy.

"Speak to him, Ted," I whispered. He threw his arms around me convulsively: his face showed absolute terror.

"I can't! I can't!" he sobbed. "Oh, *do* let me call some one!"

"Ted," I said, fondly, "there is nothing here to be afraid of."

"I'm *not* afraid," he gasped; "but—"

The fairy king's voice, strident and angry, recalled my attention to him. His face was black with rage. "Send that little fool away," he roared; "he is of no use here."

I put my arm about Ted's shoulders, and, facing the angry king, said firmly, "You forget yourself, sir; I begin to have grave doubts of your character. No honest fairy ever thought or spoke thus of a child. I ought to order you off my premises at once, but I have pledged my word and shall keep it. Ted *shall* decide."

"Put it before him yourself, then," growled the king, "*I* don't want to talk to him."

"Very well," I replied, seating myself once more in my great arm-chair, and drawing Ted gently down to his accustomed seat beside me.

"Now, Ted, listen to me quietly, and judge this controversy for us."

"May I go afterward, grandfather?"

"Certainly, if you wish," and he sat quietly staring at me.

"You know, Ted, how I have been persuaded to sell this old place. It has worried me greatly, and what the fairy king has said to-night has

greatly increased my perplexity. He urges"—and I repeated shortly the evening's conversation. I told Ted that thought for his future had chiefly moved me to consent to the sale, and that, of right, he ought to decide whether it should be or not.

"Sell it, and leave it as soon as you can, grandfather," he answered, quickly. "It is so quiet, so lonely, I know it is bad for you. I *hate* it."

He spoke excitedly, and I was surprised to see missed the point of the matter entirely. "Never mind *me*," I said; "speak of yourself. What do you mean to do when you grow up?"

"Grandfather, I could not stay here all my life. I like books and flowers, and all that, but I like people too. I want to work, I want to do something, something *big*—I want to be of some use; I never could amount to anything *here*. Sell it, *I* say," and he rose.

"But the fairies, Ted?"

"Oh, the fairies. There are plenty of places for them. Look at Central Park!"

"You have solved the problem, my boy," I cried, delighted. "You—" he did not stop to hear me; for once Ted was actually disrespectful.

"I'll be back in a minute," he cried, and hurried from the room. I heard him call Phineas.

Then there was a hurried whispering, and I heard the front door open and close.

I turned to the fairy. He had resumed his seat and his pipe; his wrathful look had passed away; he seemed gentle and thoughtful, more so than at any time before.

"You heard Ted's decision?"

"Yes, and I will abide by it. You seemed pleased by his suggestion that we should remove to a place called Central Park: was it good?"

"A perfect one. It is the very place for fairies, for you especially, since it is the crown and glory of our city. It is full of dusky dells and hidden places amid the trees; silvered with placid lakes and murmuring streamlets—a place of flowers and birds, and merry children. It is as securely shut out from the evil emissaries of the Spirit of the Age as I was here, and will be so long as our island shall last. Those guard it whose hearts are in its beauty. All are in accord to keep it sacred, that is their single thought. Selfishness, political intrigues, petty personal spites have no part in their deliberations. No noble tree is ever felled, no grassy nook disgraced, no fairy haunt profaned. It is a perfect fairy land, waiting only for its king."

The fairy seemed delighted.

"My dear Reginald, why didn't you mention this sooner? it would have saved time and some

hard words. I would not have intruded upon you at all, except perhaps to say 'good-by.'"

"I knew Ted could settle it; he is wonderfully clever."

The king had risen, and was, I knew, about to leave me. We both felt a little sad.

"It was not the boy, Reginald, it was the Spirit of the Age speaking through his lips. I knew that voice, and I heard in the simple words more than a mortal could. I am a spirit, too. I have feared the Spirit of the Age, I have hated him, for he has shorn me of my power. Yet I never heard his voice nor felt his presence until this night. I cannot tell you what his words were, but they were strong and brave, and full of kindliness. There is goodness in the Spirit of the Age. Now we must part; you will see me no more, but I will be about you as through all these years until you leave us. When you depart, then will I; and it will be soon, too soon, old friend, too soon."

Tears stood in his eyes. In his emotion he puffed at his pipe so vigorously that clouds of white smoke poured from it, and concealed him from me. Thicker and thicker they rolled about me, until the whole room was dimmed. Deep drowsiness seized me; I slumbered and dreamed.

I stood in a palace whose limits were beyond vision. On a throne sat a mighty figure, the per-

sonification of immeasurable power; his earnest, thoughtful gaze seemed to sweep the world. Before him knelt other spirits, not of his majesty; they were small in stature, pallid, weak, and listless. I knew them in my dream. There knelt Commerce, Art, Literature, Science — all the mighty genii.

With one voice they cried, "Oh, king, Spirit of the Age, is it not time? Bless us, oh, father, and send us forth to our work."

The Spirit bent over them; raising his mighty arms in benediction, he breathed upon their foreheads. With a shout they sprang to their feet, refreshed, gigantic, mighty, and strode forth. In passing me, unregarded as an insect, the trailing robe of Commerce swept over me. I felt one instant's crushing pain, and then—

Here Mr. Ventnor's manuscript abruptly ends. The following letter is appended for its better understanding:

"NEW YORK, December 15, 1886.

"MY DEAR TED: The enclosed manuscript was, I am very certain, written by your grandfather during his last illness. It evidently refers to the night in June, '79, when he was first seized, and you called me up to attend him. I found it after his death, and succeeded in deciphering it. It explained to me, as a physician, much that had

puzzled me in his case. I have kept it from you until now, thinking it would only be painful to you to see such strong evidence of the decay of his mental powers. Some portions are very sad—the reference to the management of Central Park, for instance. I made up my mind some time ago to let you have it to-day. You have a right to it, and will prize it, I know. My best wishes and congratulations. The girls send love, and hope you will not despise them utterly, now you have managed to become a man. Nellie is writing you all the news, so I won't forestall her.

"Affectionately,

"E. J. WHIPPLE.

"To THEODORE VENTNOR, ESQ., Freiburg, Germany."

THE MERMAN.

LAST summer I passed some weeks in Malangen, Norway, laid up with a sprained ankle. One evening my farmer host, Bernt Olaffsen, told me the following story. I believe it; so would you if you had heard him tell it.

I was left an orphan when but eight years old, and went to live with my cousin Karen, who had been a servant in the family of the minister at Alstadt, but who then lived at Kralholm, in Welgeland, having some months before married Elias, a fisherman of that place. Kralholm, for some reason, has ever been the haunt of ghosts, mermen, and all wicked spirits of the sea. It took Karen and me a long time to become accustomed to the strange sights and sounds of the lonely beach where her cottage stood.

Her husband, a cheery, hearty man, laughed at our fears, assuring us that the sea-spirits had no power over those who led godly lives and who avoided all dealings with them; so when six years had passed away, bringing with them chil-

dren and all other blessings, Karen's fears had been long since forgotten. Then suddenly Elias seemed to change. He became gloomy and silent. He was, as ever, kind and good, but his jokes and laughter were no longer heard. This was very strange, and, stranger still, he suddenly stopped all talk about the new ten-oared boat he had long meant to buy, to take the place of the old "six-oar," almost worn out with long service. That new "ten-oar" had been the theme of many a fireside talk, for it was to be the finest on Kralholm beach, but now for two years we heard nothing about it. Karen was, of course, very anxious, and at last I, having grown to be a stout lad of sixteen, ventured to question him plainly. Karen joined with me, and at last he spoke out.

One day two years before he was walking on an unfrequented part of the beach, armed with his fish-spear, and came suddenly upon a huge seal, lying asleep on a rock. It was the largest he had ever seen, but, strange to say, he felt afraid of it, and wished to run away. I say strange, for no one ever fears a seal, and the larger it is, the better the prize.

Elias mustered up his courage, crept close to the sleeping monster, and drove the spear deep into its back. With a frightful yell of rage and pain, such as no true seal ever uttered, the brute raised itself, wrenching the staff out of the fish-

erman's hands. It stood erect, seeming to grow as tall as a boat's mast. Screaming and gnashing its teeth, it glared at Elias with fierce, bloodshot eyes, while he, half-dead with fear, could only murmur a prayer. With one final bellow it plunged into the sea, carrying with it the harpoon, and discoloring the water with blood. Elias did not speak of this incident to any one. He was, in truth, ashamed. He had been frightened by a seal; had missed his blow, and lost not only his prize, but his harpoon as well. He would be finely laughed at. Afterward he found floating the staff of his spear, the iron having been broken off.

One night shortly after this he heard a great noise in the boat-house. He immediately rose and went to see if any mischief were on foot. It was midnight, stormy, and very dark. Entering the boat-house he heard no sound, and at first could see nothing. Suddenly the light of his lantern fell upon a huge black mass, from which rose, grinning and snarling, the fierce head of the monster seal. He remembered it well, and while he stood, terror-stricken, the head grew human, the seal disappeared, and in its place was a large man, entirely naked, who rushed past Elias, striking the lantern from his hand, but not so quickly that the poor fellow could not see sticking fast between his shoulders the spear of the lost har-

poon. He realized then what he had done, what vengeance he had provoked, with whom he had dealt, and had still to deal. Karen found him lying in a swoon, the broken lantern by his side. He told her nothing, and from that day was silent and gloomy; for he knew that he had incurred the deadly hate of a merman, than which no greater evil can befall a seafaring man.

But he kept on with his fishing, and one dark morning, as he was sailing out, he heard a deep voice, that seemed to call from the sea itself—

> "Your boat sails well, for the wind is free:
> Wait till you've sailed a race with me!
> When the sky is black, and the dead afloat,
> I'll show you the match of your ten-oared boat."

His men thought it was some neighbor wishing to play them a trick. Elias knew what it was.

From that day he lived in terror. He gave up all idea of buying a ten-oared boat, partly because he did not think it worth while for the short time he believed he had to live, partly because the merman's words seemed to warn him against sailing in such a craft.

We said all we could to cheer him, at first with little effect; but as months and seasons passed, and nothing evil happened, his gloom wore away, he became his old self, and again all his talk was of a new ten-oared boat.

Spring came, and a day was fixed when we were to sail around to Ranen, sell the old boat for what it would fetch, and buy the new one. Great were the preparations, for we intended to make a pleasure-party of it, and take Karen and all the children. My wife insisted that she should stay at home, so that the industrious house-mother might have at least one day's diversion—that is, she was not my wife then ; she was an orphan, like me, who had been adopted by the kind fisherman. Oh, if Elsa had only gone with us we would have come back safe and happy, for Elsa is a Finn, and the Finns know all sea-magic, and can bring to naught all the enchantments of the merman. But it was fated.

The day fixed for our trip was perfect. The sky was bright and clear ; a light breeze, fair for Ranen, just ruffled the sea. We were a merry party ; we sailed away laughing and singing, while Elsa waved us good luck from the shore.

We soon reached Ranen, and while Karen and the children went to the house of a friend Elias and I sought the boat-builder's.

We managed to sell our old boat, though we got but little for it. Then began a long and careful examination of ten-oared boats. We were hard to please, but at last found one that seemed to be just what we wanted. Her model below the water-line was so perfect, so superior to any

that we had ever seen, that we determined to buy her, although she seemed overmasted and rather clumsily rigged.

The boat-builder acknowledged this himself, saying that he had finished her hurriedly, being overrun with work. "But," said he, "you will find that there is no boat in these waters that can sail with her. She is a perfect model. Look at her lines. The faults you mention are, after all, but trifles. You can alter her rigging to suit yourselves when you get her to Kralholm; besides, I am a just man, and will allow you something off the price, so that you will really have a bargain."

So after some haggling a price was agreed upon, which Elias paid down, and the boat was his. The boat-builder, however, made us promise faithfully not to alter her in the least particular, not even to touch her with a tar-brush, until we were at Kralholm. "For," said he, "I have boasted greatly of this boat, and I do not wish to be shamed before the whole town by having you begin to alter her rig the moment you own her."

We gave the promise readily, and the builder talked so much while she was being launched that neither of us noticed that no cross was tarred on her stern.

My wife will have it that the boat-builder was in league with the merman, who had doubtless

taught him how to build so well below the water-line that he might lure us into sailing thus unprotected by the holy sign, which all fiends fear, and which would have saved us from his vengeance. She may be right; such things have been, and that man I have heard ended miserably.

Early in the afternoon we all sailed for home. We had about eight miles to go, and soon found that the sea-going qualities of our new purchase were likely to be thoroughly tested. It blew very hard, and the waves ran high. She behaved splendidly, skimming over the billows like a water-fowl, shipping scarcely a spray. We were delighted with her.

Suddenly Karen gave a cry of alarm and pointed over the stern. We looked and saw a great black cloud, which seemed to cover the whole horizon, rolling down upon us with a streak of boiling white foam before it. I sprang to reef the sail, and in an instant the squall was upon us. At once all was dark as night. We could not see each other's faces. The wind howled, and as the boat bent to it, rushing on her course, it seemed that she must capsize. The children screamed with fright. Then at a short distance to windward the blackness opened, as if a curtain had been drawn up, and in a broad space of livid greenish light we saw another ten-

oared boat. She stood out black and distinct against the half-circle of light which seemed to travel with her. She was an exact copy of our own boat; she was sailing the same course, but, while we heeled terribly to the wind and plunged madly to the raging sea, she, with full sail set, glided along on an even keel, as steady as though the sea were a mill-pond. The wind and sea seemed to have no effect on her.

I could see but one aboard her, a dark figure at the helm. She frightened me. But I could not think of her long, for the wind was now a hurricane, and every wave dashed over our bows, half filling the boat with water. I heard Elias shout, "Look out! Hold fast, all of you!" and saw an enormous wave, as high as our mast it seemed, toppling over us. Tons of water dashed down upon us, and I thought we were sinking; but our boat quickly righted and seemed to shake the water from her. I looked first for Elias. I could just make out his figure still at the helm. Then I heard a half-stifled shriek. "O Elias, husband! Martha and Nils! Save them!" It was Karen's voice. The two little ones were gone. I heard Elias groan. We could do nothing. Then I looked for the other boat. The greenish light was brighter, the strange craft more distinct. Two had been added to her crew. They stood motionless by her mast; their

faces were the faces of the dead, the faces of the drowned children. It was a fearsome sight, but before we could speak a word another mountain of water was hurled upon us, and when it had passed Karen was gone, and Anton's life-line dangled loose and empty. I could hear Elias praying, while the four older boys clung half drowned about the mast, and neither moved nor spoke.

We heard a loud laugh, and a deep voice called, "Ha! ha! Elias, I will have a full crew soon." There was the strange boat scarce fifty feet from us. In her were Karen and Anton, Nils and Martha, dead and white, and there, huge, naked, and terrible, stood the steersman, with sea-green hair and beard blowing wildly about his frightful head.

With a menacing gesture he pointed to the spike of a fish-spear sticking between his shoulders. I nearly fainted. Elias ceased praying. By the ghastly light now so near us I could see his face. It was that of a wild beast at bay, despairing but ferocious.

Drawing his long knife, he muttered, "I know you, I know you. If a spear can pierce your back this may reach your heart."

"Elias!" I shrieked, "that was on land. What would you do?"

"End this, one way or other," he shouted.

"To the sheet, fool!" and he put up the helm. I trimmed the sail close, as by instinct, and we flew to run down our pursuer. I was now desperate, too, and grasping the boat-hook, stood ready to strike.

Just as we seemed aboard of the merman another wave swept over us; I felt our boat sink from under me. Even through the rush of the water I heard wild shrieks and shouts of fiendish laughter, and knew no more until I found myself clinging with a death-grip to the unsubmerged rail of our wrecked boat, whose heavy mast and spread sail alone prevented her from capsizing completely.

The black cloud was gone, the merman was gone, the four boys were gone, but I saw Elias, caught between the boom and the toppenlift. It was snowing; the wind and the sea were as fierce as ever, but it was no longer so dark. I managed to reach Elias and drag him up beside me, holding him with one arm, while with the other I clung to the rail, resting my feet on the combing of the hatch. I thought him dead, but soon he moved and sighed.

"Courage," I said; "the merman is gone. You will live."

"No, Bernt," he answered, weakly, "God is too good to let the fiend carry his revenge so far as that. I am dying; you will be saved. You

are not of my blood. I shall soon be with Karen and the children."

He was silent for awhile. Then he whispered, brokenly, "Bernt, remember—all for you and Elsa—all."

I held him as strongly as I could. Suddenly a look of joy lit up his white face. Stretching out his arms, he cried, "Yes, Karen, I am coming." He wrenched himself free from my weakened hold, and fell backward into the sea.

I suppose I fainted then, for when I was again conscious, two days after, I was in my bed at Kralholm, with Elsa bending over me. She had found me on that fatal evening, lying drowned, as she then thought, on the beach whither she had gone to meet us all. As the weather had been perfect all day, every one supposed that Elias and his family had for some reason remained over at Ranen, and that I, returning alone in some small boat, in order to be with Elsa—for our courtship was no secret—had through some accident fallen overboard.

When I told the dreadful truth they did not believe me. When on inquiry they learned that we had sailed from Ranen, as I had said; when nothing more was heard of Elias; when the wreck of the new ten-oared boat was cast ashore on the rocks of Landspoint Island, and all could see that she had no cross tarred upon her stern,

they were convinced, and proper funeral services were held for the drowned.

Elsa and I were married. Elias' savings made us rich. We bought this farm, and neither of us has ever been in a boat since, nor ever will be.

THE INVASION OF KLEINDORF.

THE great wizard Summumbonum sat in his workshop. It was the highest room, in the highest tower, on the highest mountain in the world. He was a wizard hard to describe, because, of all the millions who sought him, none ever found him as he appeared to the last seeker.

The workshop was full of old books and odd-looking magical instruments. The wizard sat in a large, cushioned arm-chair, warming his slippered feet at a glorious open wood-fire. There is much magic in a wood-fire. At his feet sat his granddaughter Menserena. She was quite a little girl, only about seven centuries of age. Her eyes were blue, her hair was golden, and she had altogether one of the sweetest little faces you ever saw. She had been putting her doll to sleep, and, holding it in her lap, sat very quietly, for fear of waking it. All was peaceful and pleasant, but the wizard did not seem happy. It was nearly the end of the year, and the wizardry had not done well at all—in fact, had hardly paid expenses. The giants, genii, and

fairies of the household were having a good time in the kitchen. They didn't worry themselves about the business. They were sure of their wages in any event, and the less they had to do the better they liked it. The hippogriffs, dragons, and other domestic animals were happy too in their warm stable. They had been "eating their heads off" for the last year, and enjoyed doing so. Even Menserena did not sympathize with her poor old grandfather. She had the free run of the tower when trade was slack; she frolicked about the work-room and tried magical experiments of her own, which sometimes did great mischief—mischief to the instruments, I mean; she never did any harm to the world or its people. When trade was brisk she had to confine herself pretty much to her own play-room; for if her grandfather's clients happened to see the sunny child they were almost sure to speak to and play with her; if they chanced to take her in their arms they forgot all about what they came for, and went home without ever troubling themselves about Summumbonum again. They always told their neighbors, though, that they had found him, and in time grew to believe it. Of course this was very unbusiness-like and injurious to trade.

So the poor wizard was all alone with his worries.

Summumbonum was the most powerful wizard the world ever saw, and the best-meaning. His only desire was to make people happy, and for this object he worked and studied night and day. He thought he was very successful, but he was not, by any means. The trouble was that he knew too much, and was too well-meaning. People who know *too* much and are *too* well-meaning never succeed. Those only went away happy from his tower who had embraced Menserena. If he could have gotten over that unfortunate habit of everlastingly changing his outward appearance he would have done much better, but he was born so.

He was fairly aching for sympathy, so he put his hand on Menserena's golden head and said, with a sad smile,

"I wish I were as happy as you, little one."

She laid her doll carefully down on the hearth-rug, the skin of a jabberwock, with its closed eyes shielded from the light, and nestled closely to her grandfather's knee, caressing his hand with her soft cheek.

"I am worried half to death, Rena," he went on. "The expenses of this establishment are enormous, simply enormous, and I really don't see how I am to carry it on unless business picks up. The fall trade has been duller than I have ever known it, and the prospects for spring are

not encouraging. I've hardly taken in enough this year to pay the stable bill. The amount of phosphorus and brimstone consumed by the dragons is preposterous, and they hardly leave the stable except for exercise. Look at the kitchen expenses. The amount those giants and genii consume is enough to drive a wizard out of his mind.

"And the fairies! Have you any idea of the amount of honey-dew that comes into this house? Thirty pounds a week the year round; and the price whatever Oberon's court confectioner chooses to ask. That fellow is a swindler, if ever there was one! Yet they're not contented. Only yesterday the head fairy told me that in the families she had been accustomed to the fairies were never required to sit at the same table with 'common giants.' I have a great mind to retire from business, or else emigrate to Jupiter and start fresh. The field here seems to be exhausted."

"But, grandpa, I am sure things will be better soon. You know that with the new year a great many people start to seek you out."

"And they are all going to take the wrong road, every one of them; I know that by my magic art."

"Oh, grandfather! Then why don't you send

some of these lazy genii down-stairs to show them the way ?"

"You don't understand, pet. That would be very lowering. The idea of a first-class wizard like me drumming for business ! Why, I might as well advertise ; besides, the people wouldn't pay the slightest attention to anything the genii said. When a man starts out to hunt for Summum-bonum he goes his own way and no one else's."

"So, poor grandfather, nobody will come to you at all any more ?"

"I'm afraid not, pet."

"I think more people *would*, but there are lots and lots who never heard of you. Why, there's the town at the foot of the mountain—Kleindorf, you know. I go there often with nurse for candy and worsteds and things. A great many of the people know me, but when I tell them about you they only laugh, and say, 'What a fanciful little creature it is !' "

"Kleindorf ! At the foot of the mountain ! I never heard of such a place. Can I see it from here ? Fetch me my telescope."

So Menserena brought the magic telescope, and the old wizard tried very hard to see Kleindorf, but could not, for the instrument was so adjusted that nothing within a thousand miles of the tower was visible through it. The wizard had forgotten that.

"This telescope is getting worse and worse every day," he muttered, as he impatiently pushed it to one side; "I will use my spectacles. Where *are* my spectacles, Rena? I had them just now. It is strange that I can't lay a thing down for a second without its disappearing!" and he fumed about the room, looking for them.

Rena wanted to laugh dreadfully, for the spectacles were on her grandfather's forehead, where he had pushed them when he looked through his telescope. She did not like to tell him, because that would have made him angry. At last, as he was stooping under the table, they slipped down again to their place.

"There!" said he; "I knew I had put them somewhere."

Menserena showed him which way to look through the floor, just at the edge of the hearth-rug, and he saw Kleindorf.

"What a dull little place," he said. "I never saw such a stupidly contented set of people. They all think, evidently, there is no place in the world but Kleindorf. Why, they don't seem to care about anything but making themselves and their neighbors comfortable. What a very shocking spectacle! I really must do something for the poor people. They'll never come up here, I know, after you have been among them so much. I shall have to go down to them for a while,

though I don't suppose there is a decent hotel in the place; but business must be attended to. Ring the bell for the Chief Genius, Rena. Press three times, you know."

The Chief Genius came up after he had been rung for five times. He was very sulky at having been brought away from his supper.

"Did you ring, sir?" he asked.

The wizard gave him a good scolding, as he deserved, and then told him what he was to do.

Soon all was bustle and confusion; appearances had to be assumed, luggage packed, the griffins and dragons, who were very fiery, had to be harnessed, and it was morning before Summumbonum and his train were ready to ride from the tower.

As he kissed Menserena good-by he said, "Now, Rena, be a good girl until I come back, and do as nurse tells you. Keep away from the kitchen; don't touch my papers, nor play with the instruments. And above all, don't come near Kleindorf while I am there, on any account."

Kleindorf lay sleeping that sunny morning in its green valley at the southern foot of the mountain, entirely unaware of Summumbonum's benevolent intentions. Everybody slept late in Kleindorf, for there was little to do, and always plenty of time to do it in. It was a pretty town, a quiet, an innocent one. Few strangers came

there, no native ever left it. It had one gray, ivy-covered church, from which no grown person ever stayed away on Sundays; a neat school-house, which every child regularly attended; a good public library; a newspaper, and an opera house. The church was very small and plain; the school taught none of the "ologies;" the library contained only old and simple books; the newspaper never printed any news; and the operatic company was not composed of the finest artists. But church, school, library, newspaper and opera were all to the Kleindorfers the very best in the world.

Everything in Kleindorf was as good as any Kleindorfer wished. The natives were all richer than any man you know of. I don't mean that any of them had much money, but they all had as much as they wanted. So Summumbonum felt very sorry for them and determined to make them happy. You or I would think they were so already, but Summumbonum knew better. He was a wizard, and his motto was, "Discontent is the mother of progress."

Just as the church-clock of Kleindorf sounded noon, the sun being somewhere in the remote neighborhood of the town's meridian, a stranger rode slowly up its main street. He was a tall and venerable man, clad in a sombre black robe, and wearing a high conical cap of velvet, em-

broidered in silver with mystic characters. Following him on foot came a number of attendants, all old, all sombre, all dressed like himself. They seemed travel-worn, dusty, and weary. Each led a pack-mule, loaded with parcels of strange and unusual shapes. The leader's face was very downcast as he saw the smiling children, the buxom mothers, and contented fathers who gazed open-mouthed at him from the porches of the neat houses.

"Very unaspiring, very ignorant, very narrow!" he murmured to himself. "Sad! sad!"

His eyes glistened with tears of benevolence.

He rode straight up the street to the house of the Principal Man of the town, who, like his neighbors, stood at his porch with his rosy wife, surrounded by a bevy of children. He halted there, and the Principal Man, not a little astonished, came down the garden path to receive him.

The wizard announced himself.

"I am an Armenian philosopher."

The Principal Man had some idea of what a philosopher was, but "Armenian" was beyond him, so he said,

"No doubt. Certainly. Very delightful, I am sure."

"I am in search of perfection. I visit all places in my quest, and at last am here."

"My dear sir," exclaimed the chief man,

"you have come to the very place. Everything here is perfection—"

"Pardon me," and the wizard interrupted him with a wave of his hand; "I was about to say that if this *perfect* town can accommodate me and my train, I would wish to remain here for a time and prosecute my search in the neighborhood. I hear that the learned wizard Summumbonum resides near."

"Never heard of him," answered the chief man, "but no doubt you're right," for the Armenian philosopher looked quite angry.

"As for accommodation, leave that to me. Now, come right in, and rest yourself until dinner. Here, Hans! Peterkin! attend to this gentleman's horse and servants. My wife, sir; isn't *she* perfection? These are my little ones. What do you think of them, eh? Sit down and make yourself comfortable, sir. What will you take?"

"Bodily refreshment is naught to me," answered the philosopher, sternly; "I must to my work. What perfection have you to show me?"

"Why, isn't this—" and he waved his hand about the pleasant room they sat in, but stopped short as the stranger struck his ebony staff on the pretty carpet, and gazed about him scornfully.

Somehow his best parlor, for once, didn't seem anything very grand, and he was unpleasantly

certain that the stranger considered him and his family as quite inferior persons.

"Well, there's our church, our library, our school, our newspaper, our opera house. When you see *them*—"

"I have no need to see them. Send me here those who have charge of and direct them."

The stranger spoke with authority, and the Principal Man obeyed him. Soon the good minister entered. He bowed to the lofty stranger, and told him of his little church and the faith he taught there. The stranger smiled coldly; he said, in a deep voice, "Nature is the beginning of All, and the end of All. Nature has no Faith." He pressed the preacher's hand and breathed on his forehead.

Then came the librarian. To him he said, "Have you the book of Nature upon whose rocky sheets is traced the world's history? None other is worth the reading."

To the schoolmaster, who spoke of his rosy, happy children, and their splendid progress in their studies, he said, "Look at this drop of water. It holds more life than twenty schools. Study ditch-water and learn to teach Nature."

To the editor, deigning not even to notice the question as to how he was impressed with the country, "Teach thou Demos to hate Aristos; teach man, thou, that all men stand on one level,

being all animals, and help the cause of Nature."

To the director of the opera he was very severe. "What know you of music? Learn the music of the spheres, the harmonies of the universe."

He took the hand of every one of them and breathed on every forehead.

Meanwhile his followers had spread through the town, pressing hands, breathing upon foreheads, and talking nonsense until the good wizard had accomplished his design, and cast his spell over the mind of every man in Kleindorf.

For the wizard's strange words were and are powerful, magic spells. That is the reason they haven't any sense. The less sense a spell has the more powerful it is.

Their object was to produce discontent in the Kleindorfers, and they worked perfectly. The wizard understood his business. While he and his train, conscious of rectitude, slept soundly in their lodgings in the old town hall, all the rest of Kleindorf was disturbed. In every house a light burned all night long. In every house were an anxious wife and weeping children; in every house a haggard, floor-pacing man, wearily repeating over and over again some spell heard from the wizard or one of his genii. If once he could solve its meaning everything would be well. Meanwhile he could only feel that he was

an idiot, that Kleindorf was a hole, that his house was not fit to live in, that his wife was homely and shrewish, and his children noisy little nuisances. How they all longed after something—they had not the least idea what, but until they had it life was decidedly not worth living. In such pleasant musings every man in Kleindorf passed that night.

When morning came at last the wizard consulted his magic mirror and saw there that his preliminary work was done. Then he drew on the floor of the town hall a pentacle, in each point of which he placed a burning brazier. Taking his stand in the central compartment, he pronounced his spell—it was an awful one, and with even less sense than those he had used the day before. To add to its horrors it rhymed. I absolutely dare not write it down. During the spell he turned solemnly to the four points of the compass, beckoning majestically with his rod. He did it very handsomely indeed, and all the genii applauded him when he finished.

Instantly was heard a hum of many voices and the tramp of many feet, for all the despairing Kleindorfers were at once seized with the same idea, that the Armenian philosopher in the town hall was a most wise and learned person, and that he, therefore, could tell them what was meant by the sentences that so bewitched them.

So they hastened to him as one man. When they saw him standing so grave and dignified in the midst of his smoking braziers, they were quite alarmed and fell on their knees.

"What will ye, friends?" asked Summumbonum, in a grave voice.

The Principal Man answered, "Your highness, what meant you by those strange words you spoke to us but yesterday? Tell us, that we may sleep once more."

The wizard could not tell them, although he knew perfectly well. The sentences meant, of course, NOTHING, but it wouldn't do to say so, because that would break the spell; so he temporized—that is to say, told fibs.

"You could not understand their mighty meaning. Your souls and minds cling far too close to earth. Search! Search earnestly for the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; when you find them, then shall you know the meaning of those mighty sentences, and of others even more mystic. Speak! will ye undertake this search?"

"We will! we will!" they all shouted together.

"Then approach me one by one, and bow before me, while I brighten and qualify your eyes for this search, so that failure will be impossible. Approach!"

They did so, and many were the strange powers he conferred upon their eyes. Henceforth some

were to see everything backward and inside out; this was especially to enable them to understand authors' *true* meanings—the meanings the authors never think of themselves. Some were enabled to see to the centre of the earth, while everything on its surface or above it must be invisible to them forevermore. Others were so qualified that while nothing within the earth's atmosphere could be seen by them, their eyes could scan closely every planet, and separate the nebulæ of the milky way. Others again were given microscopic eyes—eyes that could see the animal life in a drop of water, that could pierce the tissues of ferns and grasses, and watch their growth.

Nothing in the universe was so large, so distant, so small, or so near, as to be invisible to one pair or another of eyes, except the very things the Kleindorfers had always loved to gaze on, their wives, their children, their homes, and all the common scenes of earth. These they could not see now, for the gain of the one extraordinary power implied the loss of all ordinary sight. This was unfortunate, and, worse still, the wizard, in giving them these magic powers, did not, either through neglect or lack of ability, confer upon them also brains to appreciate and understand what their eyes were to see.

The Kleindorfers cared nothing for this.

Thankfully blessing the stranger, they groped their way into the open air, and when they saw the strange sights their eyes were now capable of they forgot all about wives, children, homes—everything, in gazing upon the wonders of Nature.

The condition of Kleindorf that day is indescribable. The scenes were too funny to be sad, and yet too sad to be funny. The Principal Man spent the day lying on his face watching the interior of an ant-hill; about noon the editor, whose eyes were fixed upon the interior fires, fell over him. This little incident did not disturb either of them, and there they both lay by the roadside until night, when their wives and female servants forced them home. Some spent the day in the public library reading its books backward, thus learning new truths. Some gazed upon far-off worlds in the heavens until they fell into ditches, disturbing others who were studying animalculæ. Women scolded, children wept, for the baker's fires were out, and the butcher and grocer had deserted their shops. They were busy, one and all, with the higher needs of life.

That night in Kleindorf no family meal was eaten, no family prayers were said, no wife had a pleasant word from her husband, no father kissed his child good-night. It was a terrible state of affairs.

Next day things were even worse. The Klein-

dorfers now began to find their way about with staffs, and little dogs to lead them, and to recognize their neighbors by their voices.

Unfortunately there had not been in the wizard's stock enough various powers of sight to give to each Kleindorfer a distinct faculty peculiar to himself. Each had two or three fellows equally endowed. These naturally drew together and soon wrangled terribly over their observations. The town was filled with groups of quarrelling men, red-faced, angry, using dreadful language. All day long they did nothing but dispute about things we have never heard of, and they themselves did not understand. No shop was opened, no field was tilled, no work of any kind was done. Matters became desperate : the town was at a stand-still ; people were actually beginning to starve. When the Principal Man was brought home by the editor's wife, at four o'clock, with his head bandaged and bleeding, having had a scientific discussion with the editor as to the thickness of the earth's crust, the ladies determined that something must be done.

So all the women of the town were called together, and though they all talked at once and quarrelled dreadfully, it was finally decided that each woman should take up her husband's work where he had dropped it, while the doctor's wife was to open at once a private asylum, where

every man should be confined, and furnished with all the comforts of a home, including handcuffs and strait-jackets.

So next morning a brighter day dawned upon Kleindorf. All the shops were opened, the fields were tilled after a fashion, and the town looked a little like itself again, except for the throngs of dirty, dishevelled men, mooning and muttering about the streets. True, the butcheress was afraid of oxen, and always fainted at the sight of blood; the carpenteress never could drive a nail without crushing her fingers; the doctress had a prevailing idea that all white powders were magnesia; the bakeress didn't know how to make anything but jelly-cake and molasses candy; and every woman of them all insisted that her dear husband, although he had been unfortunate, should not be sent to a horrid asylum. Of course, too, the children suffered a good deal, and all household duties had to be neglected. Still things went on very well considering, and an experiment had begun that might have had, in the end, even more wonderful results than the wizard's magic spells, if Menserena had not come down the mountain and put a stop to everything.

During the four days just described, while the Kleindorfers had been philosophizing and the wizard had been sitting in the town hall gleefully watching them, Menserena had been having a

most remarkably good time up in the tower. Her nurse was the Good Fairy who had been Cinderella's godmother, and had taken care of the Sleeping Beauty. The wizard had picked her out for the position because she was so fond of children. She was rather too fond of them, and, I am sorry to say, let Menserena do exactly what she pleased while the wizard was away. The first day Menserena really tried to be good. She did nothing worse than making a baby house out of the wizard's mystic cabinet, and dressing the doll in magical robes, girdles, and caps, to see how she looked. By their means the doll acquired strange magical properties, and did a great many extraordinary things afterward, which I may tell you about at some other time. Then she played that the doll was a wizard, and she herself a client seeking advice. But at the first question she asked, the doll, through force of magic, actually answered her. This frightened her so that she ran away to her nurse and made her read stories to her until bed-time.

The next day Menserena was really quite naughty, though without meaning to be: first, she went to the poultry-yard to feed the fowls; this was all very well, but while they were crowding about her she carelessly dropped the pan on the head of the wizard's pet phœnix, and hurt it very badly; then she went into the hen-house, as she

had often been told not to do, and frightened a roc off her nest, so that the eggs got cold and the hatching was ruined; after that she went to the stable to pet the dragons, but they were all gone; and at last she reached the paddock where the hippogriff colt was prancing about. The colt flew to her for his lump of sugar; she caught him by the left wing and was on his back before he knew it. The colt had never been mounted before, so he was much frightened, and pranced and plunged about until he finally threw Menserena off in a muddy spot. She hurt her knee, and her clean dress was a sight. The Good Fairy for once was provoked at her, and, I am happy to say, put her to bed at once, although it was still broad daylight.

The next day Menserena was worse than ever, for she deliberately disobeyed. Nurse was cross, she was afraid of the workshop, so she went down to the kitchen to tease the cook for a cake. She found no one there but Wing Lee. Wing Lee was a Chinese giant; his name was John Warner, and he was born in Boston. He was a very inferior giant indeed, being only a mortal and not over nine feet high. Giants being scarce, the wizard had got him at a very low price from a cheap museum, and set him to cleaning the boots and knives, answering the door-bell, and running errands. He had a dreadfully hard

time, for the other servants made all sorts of fun of him, and he never could get used to the dragons, hippogriffs, and domestic poultry. Menserena had always rather despised him, but to-day she was glad enough to get any one to talk to.

"Well, Wing Lee," said she, "you look lonely enough here!"

"Yes, Miss Rena, the rest of them have all gone with old Blunderbore to a picnic at his native place in Cornwall. They've been off somewhere most of the time since the master went away."

Then Rena looked all around the store-room, but couldn't find a thing to eat.

"Isn't it awfully dull here, Wing Lee? I never saw such a stupid place in my life. I wish you'd come and take a walk with me. Let's go and chase that nasty hippogriff that threw me yesterday."

"Good gracious, Miss Rena, I wouldn't go near him for anything. He'd tear me to pieces."

"So he would. I forgot. What stupid creatures mortals are! Oh, I know what would be fun; let's you and I go up to the work-room, and play at being wizards. There's no danger; lots of mortals come there."

Now Wing Lee always had a great curiosity to see this room, for he thought he might find

there some charm to aid him in effecting his escape from the dreadful place. Still he hesitated. "Now, you won't play any tricks, will you? Promise."

"I never do. I did turn one client into a goose, but I was a very little girl then, and it was just an accident. Grandpa turned him back again, so it didn't do any harm; but my, wasn't he frightened! Come along, Wing Lee. I'll promise, true as true."

So Menserena and Wing Lee went up to the work-room, which the giant thought quite the most homelike place he had seen in the tower, but when Menserena told him the uses and powers of all the different articles he was astounded.

For instance, in a pot on the window-seat grew a small, ordinary-looking shrub, something like an azalea out of bloom. "That," she said, "is the plant komoncence. Grandfather says he is the only wizard who ever had it. He has discovered that a single touch with a sprig of it will dissolve the most powerful enchantment instantly. Perhaps you're an enchanted prince; who knows?" She pulled a sprig of it and touched him with it, but nothing happened, for there was no enchantment about poor Wing Lee. He was only a very ordinary, though somewhat overgrown mortal.

"Pooh!" said Menserena, and flung the sprig from her. It fell on a splendid magic crystal which Summumbonum had worked on nearly six months for a very particular customer, and the magic crystal disappeared as a soap-bubble might.

"There!" said Menserena.

"For goodness' sake, Miss Rena, put that thing in your pocket; you'll be having the whole place about our ears next," exclaimed Wing Lee.

Rena did so, for she was a little frightened at her own mischief. "There," she went on, "are grandpa's magic spectacles. You look through them and you can see any place you want to, and everything that is going on there. Just try them; they're real fun. They won't hurt you. Any one can use *them*." So Wing Lee put them on.

"Where shall I look?" said he.

"Look at Kleindorf and see what grandpa is doing. Just say out loud, 'I wish to see Kleindorf.' That's right. Now you see it, don't you?"

Wing Lee looked, and saw Kleindorf as I have described it on the third day of Summumbonum's visit.

"I declare, it's an outrage!" he cried; "just look, Miss Rena."

Menserena took the spectacles and stared at Kleindorf in shocked amazement, while Wing Lee went on:

"I suppose this is the result of one of master's schemes for making people happy. I know he means well, but he does more mischief than any one else in the world. Why can't he let people alone? I wish Mr. Hale would come up here, and tell him the yellow-dog story."

"It's a perfect shame," broke out Menserena, almost crying. "There's that nice old Mother Gredel, who keeps the candy-shop, tearing her hair, while the children are all roaring around her like mad jabberwocks, not a thing to eat in the house, and her husband fighting outside with Father Diedrich, who lives next door. Grandfather's been enchanting them. Oh, if I were only a wizard! Oh, dear! oh, dear!" and she fairly wrung her little hands, "what shall I do?"

"I know what I'd do if I had a bit of komoncence about me and Summumbonum would forgive me as he will you. It wouldn't take me long to get down to Kleindorf, I know."

"Oh, Wing Lee, how clever of you! I'll do it the first thing to-morrow morning."

"Why not this afternoon? I'll go with you."

"It will be dark before we get there, and I wouldn't be on the mountain at night for anything. All sorts of horrible creatures are prowling about. Bundersnatches, frumious ones, and jub-jub birds, and I don't know what all."

"Pooh, I'm not afraid," said Wing Lee; "but

of course if *you* are we'd better wait till to-morrow, and the Good Fairy can go with us."

So next morning the three started for Kleindorf. When they reached the plain Wing Lee asked if they were now out of reach of the Bundersnatches. Upon being told they were, he said, "Good-by, Miss Rena; good-by, nurse."

"Why, where are you going?" asked Menserena.

"I am going home," answered Wing Lee.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Menserena.

But the Good Fairy said, "Oh, let him go, Rena; he is too stupid ever to be of any use here. Here, Wing Lee, accept a parting gift." She touched his tongue with her staff. "Accept the gift of conversation."

So Wing Lee went back to Boston, and, what with knowing so much about Summumbonum, and being a gifted conversationalist besides, became a very great man there.

About noon Menserena and the Good Fairy, each armed with a bit of komoncence, entered Kleindorf. The first person they saw was the Principal Man. He was still lying on the ground, watching the interior of the ant-hill. "What *are* you about?" asked the Good Fairy.

"I am worshipping Nature," replied the Principal Man, dreamily.

"You are making a goose of yourself," said the fairy, "getting yourself full of dirt and catching an awful cold." She reached down and touched his eyes with the wonderful herb.

"Now," she said, "get up and go home to your wife, like a respectable man."

The Principal Man rose slowly to his feet. He was a pitiable object.

"Eh, what?" he muttered, as he rubbed the sand from his eyes. "Why, it's Rena and her nurse. Where am I? What's the matter?"

"No matter. Go home, as I tell you, clean yourself, and get your dinner, if your wife will give you any."

The Principal Man went home very much afraid.

So Menserena and the Good Fairy went all through the town; the wonderful plant never failed of its effect, and soon every Kleindorfer was in his house, with his wife and children around him, and his eyes as they should be. Such brushing and washing, mending and nursing, kissing, scolding, and crying had never been seen or heard before in quiet Kleindorf. There was not a soul in the streets except a few children who had been sent out while their mothers gave their fathers pieces of their minds.

Menserena and the nurse then went to the town hall and entered bravely, the Good Fairy

because she had her sprig, and the child because she never was afraid of her kind old grandfather.

As soon as the wizard saw them he started up, very angry indeed. "Rena," he cried out, "you naughty child, didn't I tell you particularly not to come into Kleindorf? Has anything happened at the tower? What are you doing here, nurse?"

The Good Fairy answered boldly, "We came here, Summumbonum, to undo your work—your foolish, cruel work, and we have undone it. Your spells are all broken, and love, and peace, and happy days have once more come back to Kleindorf; its people will henceforth seek the Good, the True, and the Beautiful in their own way, not in yours, and find them the sooner."

Summumbonum's hands shook with rage.

"Seize that vile, meddling creature, and bear her to the dungeon of serpents!" shrieked the wizard, to the attendant genii.

They rushed toward her, but she bravely held forth her sprig of komoncence, and how they did tumble backward over and over to get out of its way.

"Menserena," cried the wizard, "you told her of that plant. You have ruined me, you wicked child, and I will never, never forgive you."

Menserena cried bitterly. She had never been spoken to so harshly in all her life.

"Don't be silly, master," said the fairy, quietly; "you know very well you don't mean that. You do, eh? Well, then, listen to me. You are a very powerful wizard, though a very silly one, and I have served you faithfully, partly because I was spell-bound, partly for your kindness, most of all for love of this dear child. Now I have what no other fairy ever had. With my fairy lore and komoncence together I am mightier now than you. Promise me to forgive Menserena, to return to your tower at once with us, and give up forever your abominable habit of interfering for people's own good. If you promise this I will stay with you and this dear child, and never trouble you in your magical experiments, unless you make more mischief. If you refuse I shall instantly destroy every trace of magic in your possession, and transform you into a letter-carrier. Now, which will you have, peace or war?"

The old wizard bowed his head. He was beaten, and he knew it. He saw Menserena's bitter tears, the first the bright, happy child had wept since her babyhood. His own eyes filled; he stretched out his arms to her; she sprang into them, and as they kissed each other the wizard was glad, and cried out as cheerfully as if his pet scheme had not been ruined forever,

"I promise, Good Fairy, on my sacred word

of honor. Now let us get back to the tower. Bother Kleindorf! the game isn't worth the candle."

He waved his wand. Hippogriffs, dragons, giants, genii, and fairies assumed their proper shapes at once, for the sake of rapid travelling.

Out of the town hall, over the roofs of Kleindorf they flew, amid the cheers and shouts of the few children who were out of doors.

These immediately raced home to tell of the wonderful circus procession they had seen in the air, and were immediately lectured on the wickedness of telling stories, and sent to bed supperless.

Wonted happiness returned to Kleindorf. The gifted shrub had taken from the men all memory of the mystic sentences, and of the strange sights they had seen during their blindness; but all recollected the visit of the Armenian philosopher to the Principal Man and its results. I should strongly advise philosophers, Armenian or otherwise, searching for perfection, to keep well away from Kleindorf; Kleindorf has a deep horse-pond.

Summumbonum kept his promise, though at first it worried him terribly when he saw people contented and happy in other ways than his. But after awhile he received from a Mr. John Warner, of Boston, a letter full of good advice

and the yellow-dog story. He read both, and then took his motto from over the front door and hung it up in his work-room. After that whenever people came to seek him he sent for Menserena, and the only advice he gave them was to embrace her.

If any of my readers ever seek Summumbonum let them follow this advice cheerfully, and I promise them that, whatever may happen, their lives cannot be all unhappy.

LABOR TROUBLES ON AN ISLAND.

I COULD make out from his talk that he had been the secretary of some manufacturing corporation which had been obliged to shut down on account of a strike. He was telling a friend about it, and a part of the story was interesting.

Well, no sooner had the president mentioned Dick Johnson's name than Lecour said, "If he's engineering this we mustn't give an inch. Lecour's our chemist; you've seen him—little fellow with a crutch. Know him? Don't you remember the trouble he gave Carter and me the time we were cast away on that island?" He had never told us anything about it. You see, the professor's been around more than most men, so, though I don't know whether he was ever wrecked on an island or not, I shouldn't wonder. At any rate, that's what he said.

He'd been at Mare Island, he told us, experimenting at the Government's expense with a new submarine torpedo boat he'd invented. One evening on a trial trip something went wrong

with the machinery, and he couldn't get her back to the surface.

Luckily they had air enough to last for some hours—he had his foreman (this Johnson we were talking about, the walking delegate who ordered our men out) and two workmen with him—for it was morning before they got the trouble located and repaired. They found themselves in the middle of a regular Pacific fog, thick as a blanket, and without any idea of where they had got to. In their confusion they had left the electric engine and the steering gear to take care of themselves, and the boat had been making best speed all night in some utterly unknown direction. During the day they ran across a derelict timber brig, waterlogged, and with only the stump of her foremast standing. There was only one man on board, and he was pretty nearly dead, his right arm smashed by a musket-ball, and mortification just about setting in. That was Joseph H. Carter, her master and owner. How he came to be in such a hobble is another story. You ought to get him to tell it to you. Yes, Forbes and Carter. That's the man. Good fellow, isn't he? Well, the professor saved his life with a carving-knife and a hand-saw, and during the six weeks they drifted about without seeing a sail got him started on the road to health. Yes, they abandoned the torpedo boat. One night, when it was

blowing hard enough to send the old brig walloping along some five or six knots an hour, she came up with an awful crash on the outer reef of a coral island. Lecour struck his head against something hard and was knocked senseless.

The secretary told the rest of the story in the first person as Lecour had told it to him, and I will follow his example.

When I came to myself I was lying on the shore under a tree. Carter lay near me, seemingly dead. The other three, Johnson, Murphy, and Schwarz, seemed to be all right. As soon as it was light enough to see, they had towed themselves and us two helpless ones ashore. The gig wasn't much damaged. I asked for water. They didn't have any—hadn't thought to bring anything at all ashore with them. The brig was still lying where she had struck, about an eighth of a mile out. She had a bad berth and couldn't, it was plain, hold out much longer. I told the men at once to row out to the brig and bring ashore everything useful they could get at while the opportunity lasted. They started off. I had my flask in my pocket with a little brandy in it. I took a sip or two myself and then managed to revive Carter.

In an hour or so the men brought up their first load. Such a collection of incongruous and, to

us, mostly useless odds and ends, you never saw. They had any quantity of bedding, all the cabin stores, tea, canned stuff, cigars, liquor, and the like, besides a lot of crockery, Carter's clothes, his razors, brush and comb, and all the wash in the cabin, but none of the regular stores at all, no bread, no rope, no nails, not a tool, except one hatchet, no matches, none of the countless necessaries in which the brig was so rich and we so poor. They had a tin pail of water, however, and plenty to eat for the time being, which were the most important things just then. We had the afternoon before us, and I could instruct them what to bring in subsequent trips, so I told the men to get a meal. Seeing a can of condensed milk among the other things, I asked Johnson to hand it to me. As he passed it he caught sight of the label.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Lecour, but we can't use any of that 'ere ?"

"What's the matter with it ?"

"It's Wilkinson & Co.'s, sir, and they're boycotted."

"Come, come, Johnson, joke some other time ; we're faint : pass the can."

"I'm not jokin', sir, and I won't have nothin' to do with it."

But he dropped it within reach. I managed to open it with my pocket-knife, mixed a little brandy

with the milk in a cup, and proceeded to feed Carter and myself.

Then Johnson rose with awful dignity. "Mr. Lecour, as Amalmagated Workingmen we are bound to enforce this boycott ordered by our executive committee. The rules is perfectly clear, and I declare a boycott ag'in you and Cap'n Carter. Come out, men."

With unquestioning obedience the two men rose from the scarce tasted food, but Schwarz still held a can of beef he was opening.

Carter mustered up strength to say, "Drop that, Schwarz; my property, you know. These boycotts are of the kind that cuts two ways."

"Put it down, Schwarz; everything belongin' to 'em is boycotted."

They all turned to go. It began to look as if they were in earnest.

"See here, Johnson," I called, "there's no time to waste in nonsense; you must get all you can out of that brig before sundown. She may go to pieces to-night; the sky looks like wind."

"We can't work for you no more, sir, till the boycott's off."

"But for your own sakes?"

"And we won't handle boycotted stuff nohow," and off walked the Amalgamated Workingmen, common sense, common humanity, even

the instinct of self-preservation organized out of them.

An extreme case? Not at all. You can read of sillier performances of the same sort in every newspaper. The operation of biting its own nose off to spite its face seems to be organized labor's best hold.

Carter and I spent the afternoon nursing ourselves, and, thanks to the bedding, slept soundly all night. When we woke the brig was gone. There was considerable sea on beyond the reef. Carter said he felt better. I soon found a stick to answer for a crutch, and was as much good as I ever am. I made a fire—well, I know I said we had no matches. No, you can't get flint on coral islands; but a couple of watch crystals will make a good burning-glass, and we had a warm breakfast. Along in the afternoon Murphy appeared. I called to him to come and get something to eat.

"Shure, an' is it me ye take fer a 'scab'? Go back on me union? Niver!"

But he consented to bring Johnson to talk to me.

"Why do you bother about those fellows?" asked Carter. "We can stand it longer than they can. They've got to give in soon or starve."

I pointed to the almost empty water-pail.

"Starve! yes, and so shall we. See, our water

is nearly gone. Where are we to get more? No doubt there is water on the island, but how are we two cripples to go in search of it? Did you notice Murphy's face? It was that of a famishing man, and yet these woods and the sea before us fairly teem with wholesome food, useless to them on account of their ignorance, unattainable by us because of our physical helplessness. Together we can live and do well here, spite of the loss of the brig; apart as we are now we must all inevitably perish."

But now the Amalgamated Workingmen appeared. One look at Johnson's stern face assured me that nothing was to be gained by talking sense to him. I must treat this absurd boycott as a solemn thing. So, requesting the three men to be seated, I humbled myself before the Amalgamated Workingmen, and begged them on any terms the boycott might be taken off.

"Mr. Lecour," said Johnson, "your words is, as you have always showed yourself, those of a gentleman, but they comes too late. You see, we ain't exactly boycottin'you, we are enforcin' the Wilkinson boycott. We didn't order it, and we can't take it off. Only the executive committee can do that. It's unfort'nit, in course, that we are not just now in direct communication with that body," here he dropped his oratorical tone for one of vexed perplexity, "'n I don't

see what in thunder we are going to do about it."

"I always understood that your local organizations had full power to regulate such details in their own territories."

"Certinly they has. But ther ain't no local"—he paused, he had an idea. "We will retire for consultation," he announced, pompously.

Before closing their conference the men organized provisionally local assembly No. 2714, O. A. W., with Johnson as president, Murphy as secretary and treasurer, and Schwarz as walking delegate. This august body raised the boycott upon these conditions: I was to pay into the hands of the treasurer a fine of $1000, to take back into my employ all union men then out at advanced wages, to employ thereafter none but union men, and to use no more of Wilkinson & Co.'s goods.

"Now, men," said I, "get something to eat at once. Help yourselves."

"Excuse us, sir," said Johnson, "we prefers not to subsist on charity. Cap'n Carter need not remind us again that these things is his private property. We is earning fair wages now, and wishes to pay for what we consumes."

After that matters went on smoothly. We prepared for a protracted stay. The men had found a spring of fresh water. My knowledge of nat-

ural history, and their strength combined, procured abundant food. Shelters were created, and, having placed a conspicuous signal on the highest point of the island, we waited in patience for our rescue. The men kept up their local assembly and held weekly meetings, from which they seemed to derive much satisfaction. At the end of a fortnight they demanded an increase of twenty-five per cent on their wages. As I was paying them in the only available currency, "I. O. U.'s," which always found their way into Carter's hands, in exchange for his wares, and thence into the fire, I assented at once, and Carter raised all his prices.

Next week there was a new demand, a new advance, a new price current from Carter. So it went on for over a month. Then our local assembly inaugurated an eight-hour movement. I joined in it heart and soul. Next they demanded that six hours should constitute a day's work without reduction of wages.

Granted cheerfully, but Carter said he didn't like it.

"Why, man," I said; "there isn't work enough to keep them busy two hours a day. What difference does it make?"

"But where's it to stop?" he asked.

Pretty soon they wanted four hours, then two. Both concessions were made—the latter, how-

ever, with a strong intimation that I had almost enough of their nonsense, and they had better stop right where they were. Johnson looked ugly, and that night the local assembly held a special meeting. Carter was very blue. I laughed at him. I could not believe sane men would commit the suicidal folly he too justly dreaded.

But next day I was informed that it was degrading to manhood and contrary to nature that human beings should under any circumstances render service to other like beings. They would therefore work for me no longer, but, it being entirely my fault that they were detained here, I must continue their wages as a sort of indemnity. It was simply the theory of the eight-hour movement carried to its logical conclusion. Grant that wage laborers have the right to fix the number of hours which shall make a day's work, and earn a day's pay; grant them, as they had here, the power to enforce their decision. Suppose they fix upon no hours at all—what are you going to do about it?

The men did not wait for any reply, but gathered together such property as they considered their own, turned away, leaving us in evil plight. Our stock of food from the brig was long since exhausted, and, relying upon the bountiful table daily set by Nature, we had made no store of provisions. You know what a helpless cripple I

am, and Carter, with one arm gone, was still unfit for work.

Day by day we became less able to perform the tasks on which our existence depended. At last Carter gave in completely and crawled into a hut to die. That night a tempest destroyed our frail dwelling, and we lay in a drenching rain, too weak to seek other shelter. Next day I had a raging fever and was unable to move. Carter seemed dead.

That is my last recollection of the island. I came back to life on the United States steamer Swatara. Cruising in these waters, she had been driven out of her course by a storm (probably the same that destroyed our hut), had run near the island, seen our signal, set a boat ashore, and rescued us—none too soon. Carter was alive, as was Johnson. Murphy and Schwarz were dead. They had blindly obeyed my orders without thought, and so knew nothing for themselves of the island's food products. So Schwarz ate something poisonous and died in agony. After that the other two distrusted everything. They would soon have starved. I say they would have, for, although Murphy was dead, I don't think he starved to death. Only a part of his body was found, and that strangely mutilated. Every one on the Swatara shunned Johnson as if he was a leper.

Well, that was what organized labor did for us, and that's the sort of a man Dick Johnson is.

"Do you believe one word of that yarn?" he asked the secretary's friend.

"Well, I don't know. I did while Lecour was telling it," answered the secretary.

WEST POINT.

A Comedy in Three Acts.

CHARACTERS.

Randolph Pendexter (*4th Corporal B Co., 7th Regt. N. G. S. N. Y.*), *age* 24.

Graf Heinrich von Roden (*Captain in the White Cuirassiers*), *age* 23.

Robert Wendell (*U. S. Corps of Cadets*), *age* 20.

Frederick Clayton (*2d Lieutenant 34th U. S. Infantry*), *age* 23.

Alfred Clayton (*Lieutenant-Colonel U.S.A., retired*), *age* 50.

Jim (*Hall Boy West Point Hotel*).

Mrs. Randolph Pendexter (*Widow of* General Randolph Pendexter, *C. S. A.*), *age* 42.

Mrs. Louise van Orden Hunt (*Widow of* Brigadier-General Hiram Hunt, *U. S. Volunteers*), *age* 23.

Nellie Clayton (*Daughter of* Colonel Clayton), *age* 18.

Cadets, Ladies, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Grounds of West Point Hotel. South-west corner of hotel with piazza and steps left.*

Enter COL. CLAYTON *from hotel.*

COL. C. (*Sol.*) Ten o'clock, eh! And I was to be up for guard-mounting! Not I! It was a luxury to damn the morning gun, and go to sleep again. Well, the old place doesn't alter much. I could almost imagine myself back in my "plebe" camp forty years ago nearly. "Plebe" camp was purgatory in those days, but it's nothing to looking after half a million of other people's money, and a third-class corporal can't "haze" half as well as a good-looking young widow.

Enter LT. CLAYTON, R.

LT. C. My dear father—

COL. C. Eh, what! Why the devil don't you salute, sir?

LT. C. (*Saluting.*) Colonel!

COL. C. (*Returning salute.*) Leftenant! My dear boy! This is a surprise! I thought you in Wyoming with your command.

LT. C. I'm on leave. Got it unexpectedly, and I didn't write. I reached New York Monday afternoon, went to the house, heard you were at

Saratoga, and started after you. I only stopped here over night to see some of the fellows.

COL. C. Here! Slept in the mess on a sofa all night, I suppose? But I'm glad to see you. You're looking hearty. Nothing like the army, Fred. But why are you not in uniform, sir?

LT. C. I'm not on duty, sir.

COL. C. Not on duty? Do you only wear your uniform when you have to? In Charley May's dragoons, sir, we slept in our uniforms, dined in 'em, danced in 'em, and, by Jove! a good many of us died in 'em.

LT. C. I fancy it was a case of uniform or shirt-sleeves with you gentlemen of the Mexican expedition.

COL. C. The Mexican expedition? The Mexican expedition? Oh, the service is going to the devil!

LT. C. But what are you doing here? I didn't expect to see you.

COL. C. I know it, Fred. It's the last place I ever ought to have brought Hunt's widow.

LT. C. (*Aside.*) Mrs. Hunt here already! Good!

COL. C. But she and Nellie would come. Saratoga was too gay for her deep mourning. I wish you could see it! Besides, they wanted to see the natural beauties of West Point. There goes one of them now in a gray jacket four sizes

too tight for him. I didn't mean her ever to see an officer.

LT. C. (*Aside.*) Encouraging for me!

COL. C. Egad! I wish she'd get married.

LT. C. So she is here! I'm glad of that. Perhaps she'll take a fancy to me.

COL. C. Don't be a fool, Fred.

LT. C. But why not? It would be a grand good scheme. Half a million—think of it! By George! there'd be no more "army blue" for me.

COL. C. Boy, have you no sense of honor? You are my son; she is my ward. We are poor; she is immensely rich. I am ashamed of you! But it isn't your fault. It's the clothes. You look like a Jew sutler in "cits," and you seem to think like one. You couldn't have said that in uniform.

LT. C. But just hear me! General Hunt's will makes no difference. That ridiculous clause would never stand. She can marry a whole regiment of soldiers if she wants to, so why not me? I might as well get it as some confounded starched West Pointer.

COL. C. (*Aside.*) How the "cit" appointment will stick out! (*Aloud.*) Now, Fred, once for all! I'm her trustee under Hunt's will, and Hunt's wishes, though he was a volunteer and an idiot, are going to be carried out. She shall not marry a soldier, if I have to shoot every one she

lays eyes on. What! saddle myself with that property for life? No, sir! I'm half crazy with it now, and a year more of it will see me in Bloomingdale. I could stand the land—the lawyers see to that. But the money—one hundred thousand in Governments! Think of it! Lugging that with me wherever I go, trying to sleep with it in my bedroom!

LT. C. Good heavens, father! You don't mean to say you carry the bonds about with you? I never heard of such an utterly insane thing.

COL. C. Never you mind about the bonds. I'm trustee, and I don't want any deputies, if they do call themselves banks and safe-deposit companies. I know all about them. I'm not crazy yet. They may make me so, but they sha'n't make me dishonest. Not one cent of that money shall ever be found sticking to my fingers, or yours either. Mark that. (*Very loud.*) Damn the will! Let her marry a soldier, and see if I'll keep the money. No, sir; not if I have to ram it down the fellow's throat.

Enter MRS. HUNT *and* NELLIE *on piazza.*

Don't talk so loud, Fred. Here she comes!

(*Goes up stage to meet them. They come down steps.*)

LT. C. (*Sol.*) What a pepper-box the old man is! But he's in earnest. He won't keep the

money if she does marry a soldier; and if I have luck, I'll be the soldier she'll marry.

NELLIE. O father, we've been looking all over for you. We're going to Denton's to get some candy, and sit on a caisson and eat it, and watch cavalry drill.

COL. C. Let me catch you sitting on a caisson and eating it. You mustn't stir off the piazza while those horses are on the plain.

MRS. H. We've been to guard-mounting, colonel. What a dreadfully early person you are! Did you see the sun rise? Don't you find it very bad for your temper?

COL. C. Madam, my day does not break until you appear. You are my sunrise.

(*Bowing deeply*, MRS. H. *courtesying with mock ceremony.*)

LT. C. (*Aside.*) Oh, this is imbecile!

(*Goes to join them.*)

COL. C. (*Aside.*) And I do find you very bad for my temper.

NELLIE. (*Seeing* LT. C.) Why, Fred, where did you come from? I'm so glad! (*Kisses him.*)

MRS. H. Nellie! Who is this gentleman?

COL. C. Good Heavens, Mrs. Hunt, is there any harm in her kissing her own brother? Let me present to you my son, Lieutenant Clayton, 34th Infantry.

LT. C. Ah, Mrs. Hunt, if you knew how I have longed for this occasion!

COL. C. A soldier, madam—not much of a one—only a civil appointment, but a soldier.

NELLIE. O Fred, I do so want to see a cadet! Please show me some.

COL. C. Nellie, don't let me see you speaking to a cadet. Cadets become officers, and all officers are very improper persons for ladies to know. (*Aside.*) That's for your benefit, madam. To think that I should live to blackguard the army. Confound the will! (*Aloud.*) Mrs. Hunt, you must play dragon, and keep my little girl out of mischief. (*Aside.*) Who's to chaperone you, Lord knows!

MRS. H. (*Overhearing.*) Don't fret, colonel. I'm past cadet-fever, and I never was fond of boys. Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Clayton! But you're not a cadet, though—I forgot.

COL. C. (*With great scorn.*) He?

(*First call for cavalry drill, outside.*)

NELLIE. There goes the call. Do come, papa; you will be my cadet for the present.

MRS. H. I can carry my parasol myself, thank you, Mr. Clayton. Walk with me, please, Nellie.

NELLIE. All right. You go with papa, Fred. We'll see you later.

MRS. H. Nellie, don't.

(*Exit* COL. *and* LT. C., R.)

MRS. H. Nellie, don't be so slangy.

Enter MRS. PENDEXTER *on piazza.*

He isn't my brother, you know. Why! good gracious! It can't be—it is—Aunt Ann! I must stop and speak to her. Run along, Nellie, slowly. I'll overtake you in a minute.

(*Exit* NELLIE. MRS. H. *turns to go toward* MRS. P.)

MRS. H. Aunt Ann!

MRS. P. Louise!

(*Comes down steps. They meet and embrace.*)

MRS. P. My dear child, how do you happen to be here? When did you arrive?

MRS. H. Only last night. I got back on the Baltic, and went directly to Saratoga to join Colonel Clayton. He's my guardian, or, rather, my trustee, you know.

MRS. P. But I don't know. (*Sits down on camp-chair.*) Tell me.

MRS. H. (*Taking chair.*) What! haven't you heard about that ridiculous will of Hiram's? I thought everybody knew it. I suppose the poor dear thought I wasn't old enough, or ugly enough, or something, to take care of myself, so he made his will like this—let me see—he left all his property to Colonel Clayton—in trust, you know—to pay me the income of it until I marry again, when he is to turn over the principal to me for my own.

MRS. P. How very odd! Just the reverse of the way most old men treat their young widows.

MRS. H. But here's the funny part of it. If I marry a soldier, every cent of the property is to go to Colonel Clayton, and I'm not to have anything at all.

MRS. P. Really! (*Aside.*) How fortunate I did not put Randolph into the army! (*Aloud.*) But how absurd! Why, dear Hiram was one of the Northern vandals himself!

MRS. H. Yes, a sort of a kind of a vandal—a brigadier-general of volunteers in the wholesale grocery trade. He didn't like real soldiers, especially one—a man in the Coldstreams we met at Monaco. He was awfully nice and awfully attentive, though I'm sure I never even looked at him—hardly.

MRS. P. Of course not. (*Aside.*) I hope he won't appear here. (*Aloud.*) But, cherie, tell me who is to have the money in case no one marries you?

MRS. H. Oh, I don't know! I never looked at that part. It isn't worth while, you see. But I'm so glad you're here. Just think, I haven't seen you for three years!

MRS. P. True, dear, and you have known heavy sorrow in the interval. I can feel for you. I know what it is to lose an adored husband. (*Handkerchief.*) What a lovely trim-

ming that is, Louise! Who made the dress for you?

MRS. H. (*Getting up to show it.*) It is a lovely fit, isn't it? It came from Paris. I was there six months, having my mourning made up; and I've brought over a perfect load of lovely things. I'll show them to you if I get a chance while you're here. How long are you to stay? (*Aside.*) I ought to join Nellie.

MRS. P. I don't know; it depends upon Randolph's health.

MRS. H. (*Seating herself again.*) Is Randolph with you? That's splendid! I haven't seen him since the engagement party you gave for me, just before he went to Heidelberg. I have to laugh every time I think of it. You know, we'd always been pretty good friends, and his tragic air when he wished me fifty years of wedded bliss was too absurd.

MRS. P. Fifty years! Why, dear Hiram was sixty then, wasn't he?

MRS. H. Good gracious! no, aunt—only fifty-nine. And he was awfully kind. I buried him at Nice seven, or—let me see (*counts on fingers*)—November, December, January—yes—eight months ago. (*Handkerchief.*) He must have grown?

MRS. P. What on earth are you talking about, Louise?

MRS. H. Why, Randolph. Is he quite a big boy?

MRS. P. My dear child, he is nearly two years older than you are.

MRS. H. So he is; but then a girl always seems older than a boy, somehow. But you said something about his health. Isn't he well?

MRS. P. O Louise, how can I tell you! A general break-down, the natural consequence of his own folly. You remember what a nice, quiet, gentlemanly boy he was before I sent him to Heidelberg?

MRS. H. Yes; he was a bit of a Molly.

MRS. P. You wouldn't know him, he is so changed. (*Rising.*) It was the mistake of my life, sending him off to that horrid German university alone.

MRS. H. (*Rising.*) Aunt!

MRS. P. He never went near a lecture.

MRS. H. (*Laughingly.*) The wretch!

MRS. P. He learned to smoke.

MRS. H. (*Guiltily.*) Cigarettes?

MRS. P. No; a nasty pipe.

MRS. H. (*Disgusted.*) Disgusting!

MRS. P. He drank beer.

MRS. H. (*More disgusted.*) Ugh!

MRS. P. He fought duels.

MRS. H. What, Randolph? (*Aside.*) Bless him! I knew he'd come to something.

(RANDOLPH, *without, singing.*)

MRS. P. There he is now, disgracing himself, as usual.

Enter RANDOLPH, *carelessly dressed, Knickerbockers, polo cap, etc.*

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) How handsome he's grown!

RANDOLPH. Louise, by Jove! My dearest cousin, willkommen! (*As if to embrace her.*)

MRS. H. (*Giving him two fingers.*) How do you do, Randolph? (*Aside.*) He doesn't seem so very sick.

RANDOLPH. You're prettier than ever.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) Nor so very impolite, either.

MRS. P. It's really very warm, and I have left my umbrella in the hall. I'll get it myself, Randolph; you stay with Louise. (*Aside to* MRS. H.) You talk to him, dear. You know you always had a great influence over him.

(*Exit* MRS. P., R.)

MRS. H. How did you know me so quickly, Randolph?

RANDOLPH. I should have known you anywhere; but I met Colonel Clayton on the plain, and he told me you were here.

MRS. H. Then you saw Nellie. Hasn't she grown pretty?

RANDOLPH. I didn't notice her particularly. She wanted some candy, so I walked over to Denton's with her, and left her at Trophy Point.

She said she'd rest there awhile, and stroll over to the guns before the end of drill.

MRS. H. O Randolph, you shouldn't have done that! She knows nothing at all about the Point, and as likely as not will start across the plain just as they charge. If she does—those boys ride so recklessly!

RANDOLPH. Don't worry. She'll be all right. But it's quite too awfully jolly that you're here. This is a beastly place, but you and I together can manage to get a rise out of it.

MRS. H. Please don't talk slang, Randolph; I don't understand it.

RANDOLPH. Oh, I'll soon teach you!

MRS. H. I'm really worried about Nellie.

RANDOLPH. Suppose we join her. It's only a step. I should like to have you on my arm again.

MRS. H. What, in that get-up — costume, I mean?

RANDOLPH. (*Aside.*) Another governess, by Jove! (*Aloud.*) Well, if you're ashamed to be seen with me, don't come, that's all.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) His manners are dreadful! (*Aloud.*) Good-by, then. I can amuse myself very well with my book until aunt returns.

(*Seats herself, back toward* RANDOLPH, *and reads.*)

RANDOLPH. Good-by, then. (*Takes other camp-chair.*) (*Aside.*) She's the best-looking

woman on the post. I should like to show her off a little before the officers get hold of her.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) I know he's just dying to have me walk with him. He'll come round presently.

RANDOLPH. (*Gets up and leans over the back of* MRS. H.'S *chair.*) Louise?

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) I knew it. (*Aloud.*) I thought you'd gone. Well?

(*Without turning her head.*)

RANDOLPH. Aren't you going to join Miss Clayton?

MRS. H. Yes, in a few minutes; but I don't think you'd better come with me. It's very warm, and you're not well, you know.

RANDOLPH. Not well! (*Laughing.*) Where on earth did you get that idea?

MRS. H. Your mother. (*Rising and turning on him.*) Is it possible you have been deceiving your mother? Confess, sir!

RANDOLPH. (*Kneeling.*) *Mea culpa! mea maxima culpa!* I am perfectly well, but I don't want the old lady to know it. Now, open confession, easy penance.

MRS. H. Don't be in haste; there's more wickedness, I know. How about Heidelberg?

(*Sits.*)

RANDOLPH. Mother's been talking, eh? But

I say, Louise, mayn't I get up? This is awfully uncomfortable.

(*Rises. Puts camp-stool very close to* MRS. H., *who moves a little away.*)

MRS. H. Go on.

RANDOLPH. Now, Louise, don't be so awfully icy. I've nothing to say against my mother, but you know her way. She lived so long on the plantation with no one about her but slaves—that is to say, father and the niggers—that she has got into a way of settling everybody's affairs for them, especially mine. She treats me as if I were about ten years old. You know my money ought to have come to me, under father's will, when I came of age. Never a cent have I seen of it. She can't trust me with it, she says, and gives me such pocket-money as she thinks good for me. A fellow can't very well haul his own mother up to account, you know. That sort of thing did all very well before I went to Heidelberg. I was an awful duffer then. But I came back rather changed, and mother is disgusted. She don't like my ways, and I'll be hanged if I like hers. Suppose you met a couple of old college chums, and stayed out a little late, smoking and—

MRS. H. There, never mind the particulars.

RANDOLPH. Well, how would you like to come home and find your mother sitting up, reading the Church service, and weeping over you? I

never had any peace over my social duties. That means calling on all the homely old women in New York. My only plan was to get sick. Doctor said, Try a change of air; so here we are trying it; and awfully trying it's been. But now, with you here—

MRS. H. There, never mind that. You've a great deal more to answer for. O Randolph, what made you act so at Heidelberg?

RANDOLPH. Act so? Act how? Louise, I do wish you wouldn't swallow everything about me mother chooses to tell you. *Audiatur et altera pars.*

MRS. H. That's Greek, and I don't know what it means. But I do know that you never learned it in that horrid, smoky, beery, rowdyish, disreputable Heidelberg.

RANDOLPH. (*Rising.*) Louise, stop right there. I won't have it. What do you know of the life of the German "bursch." The memories of those days are the dearest part of my life. We did drink beer, we smoked, we sang. But we drank glass to glass in brotherhood and good-fellowship, and our songs were written by no unworthy men, and sang no unworthy themes—love, honor, and fatherland. If we quarrelled, our quarrels left no bitterness behind them. *Auf die Mensur!* was the cry, and we fought not with the weapons of women, but those of

men. When we laid aside our swords, our quarrels went with them. See that scar? The man who gave me that is my best friend on earth—dear old Von Roden. What a "schlager" he was! I don't do the old place much credit, I know. I didn't learn much metaphysics, but I did learn to be true to my friends, to love my country, and to value my honor beyond my life. Heidelberg made me a man. Disreputable, rowydish—you don't think so, Louise?

(*During this speech* MRS. H. *has risen. At the words "you don't," etc.,* RANDOLPH *comes up close to her and puts both hands on her shoulders, looking into her eyes.*)

MRS. H. I think—I think—oh, I wish I were a man!

RANDOLPH. I don't. But you're a little trump, all the same (*kisses her*)—there!

MRS. H. O Randolph, don't, please!

(*Releases herself.*)

RANDOLPH. Now, you're like yourself again. But Nellie Clayton? Well, I'll change my clothes, to please you. Just give me five minutes.

(*Exit* RANDOLPH.)

MRS. H. (*Sol.*) Louise van Orden, you're a little fool, to let that horrid boy talk you over—and act so. The idea! I feel as if my cheeks were in a perfect blaze. What would aunt say?

Enter MRS. PENDEXTER.

MRS. P. You see, dear, how right I was. I saw him rush off in one of his fits of temper. That's the way he always acts when I try to bring his follies home to him. He is greatly changed, is he not?

MRS. H. Yes—but—I have been agreeably disappointed. He was as nice as could be.

MRS. P. Ah, child, do not conceal your real thoughts from me! I can bear it. I know too well how rude he is to ladies.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) I suppose she can't see any difference between me and the homely old women he wouldn't call on.

MRS. P. But don't give up, Louise. Try to influence him. If you could only make him dress decently, it would be a step.

Enter RANDOLPH *in elegant morning costume.*

RANDOLPH. Here I am. Will I do, Louise?

MRS. P. What do I see?

RANDOLPH. Mother! Bother! Don't stare at me, please. (*To* LOUISE.) I can't button these confounded gloves. Got a hair-pin?

(*Business, buttoning glove.*)

RANDOLPH. (*To* MRS. H.) You will walk with me now?

MRS. H. Of course I will—but--I believe I like you the other way best, after all.

RANDOLPH. You don't mean it? (*To* MRS. P.) I just wish you'd listen to Louise, mother. She says—

MRS. H. (*To* RANDOLPH.) Hush! Do come along, you great stupid thing. (*To* MRS. P.) We're going to look up Nellie Clayton, aunt.

(*Exeunt* RANDOLPH *and* LOUISE.)

MRS. P. What a delightful thing it would be! Louise always liked him, and I know I could manage the fortune better than this Yankee colonel. (*During this* MRS. P. *has returned to piazza. On piazza, looking after them.*) There they go, and they don't seem to be quarrelling. But why do they stop? Louise seems startled at something on the plain. Ah, to be sure, that girl crossing immediately in front of the squadron! So very unmaidenly! Good heavens! I believe they are going to charge. (*Bugle call, "Charge;" noise of charge outside.*) She will certainly be ridden over. Run, you little goose, run! Dear me, this is very unpleasant!

(*Covers her eyes with her fan.*)

Enter MRS. HUNT, *running and much excited.*

MRS. H. Oh, Nellie's killed! I've killed her! I ought not to have left her!

MRS. P. (*Coming down steps.*) Killed! Who? What do you mean? Where's Randolph?

MRS. H. Oh, I don't know! He ran some-

where. I wish I had never seen him ! What will Colonel Clayton say ?

MRS. P. Good heavens, Louise, was that girl Colonel Clayton's daughter ?

Enter COL. CLAYTON. *Beside him* VON RODEN, *out of uniform, his coat torn, and his face cut, carrying* NELLIE, *her face and dress dusty and disordered. Behind them* FRED CLAYTON, *and following him* WENDELL, *in cadet cavalry rig, dirty, as if from a fall.*

MRS. H. (*Running forward.*) Colonel Clayton, oh, forgive me ! Forgive me ! Is she dead ?

MRS. P. (*Advancing calmly.*) Louise, restrain yourself. Colonel Clayton, I am so shocked ; allow me to introduce myself—

(COL. C. *pays no attention to either of them.*)

NELLIE. (*Faintly.*) I can walk now—please.

(VON RODEN *puts her on her feet.* MRS. H. *supports her.*)

MRS. H. O Nellie !

NELLIE. I don't feel much hurt, papa.

(NELLIE *and* COL. C. *embrace.*)

WENDELL. I couldn't help it, sir. My horse, the brute, pulls awfully, and—

COL. C. Get out of my sight, you young villain !

Voice without. Mr. Wendell, take your place in ranks, sir!

(*Exit* WENDELL.)

COL. C. Nellie! Nellie! My little one! There! there! I—you little idiot! Mrs. Hunt, take her to her room, and get her into bed. (*Exeunt* MRS. H. *and* NELLIE.) I'll go for the doctor. Confound it all—I feel—I—

(*Staggers toward camp-stool, into which* FRED C., *coming forward, assists him.*)

VON RODEN. (*Speaking somewhat slowly and as if unfamiliar with English.*) Sir, with your good permission, I will immediately the doctor send. You yourself will, I fear, need him.

FRED C. (*Very ungraciously.*) All right, man, go ahead.

COL. C. (*Getting on his feet with much difficulty.*) Sir, you have saved my daughter's life. You are a brave fellow. I thank you. I am Colonel Clayton. I am stopping here. Let me meet you again—I am not well, you see, and—you—will—excuse—

(*Falls back again while trying to offer his hand.*)

VON RODEN. I thank you. It was nothing. Let us say no more of it. Good-day.

(*Exit* VON RODEN.)

Enter RANDOLPH, *breathless.*

RANDOLPH. Where's Louise? Where's Nellie? Is she—hurt?

FRED C. Not very much, I think, Pendexter. Why the deuce did you leave her alone?

RANDOLPH. Not hurt! Thank God! Who was that fellow who grabbed the horse?

FRED C. I don't know. Some cad. Looked like a German Jew.

RANDOLPH. Cad! What an ungrateful cur you are!

MRS. P. Randolph, do help me with Colonel Clayton; he seems very faint.

RANDOLPH. By Jove! he does. Here, mother, never mind the salts—just fan him.

(*Unloosens the* COLONEL'S *neckcloth.* COL. C. *rouses himself.*)

COL. C. Ah, Pendexter, my boy, thank you! I feel better. (*Rising with an effort.*) Madam, you have been very kind. Will you pardon my seeming discourtesy just now? I—

RANDOLPH. This is my mother, Colonel Clayton.

COL. C. Mrs. Pendexter, I feel honored by the acquaintance of a lady of your great kindness of heart and your unusual, your soldier-like presence of mind.

Enter LOUISE. FRED C. *starts to meet her. She passes him without appearing to notice him.* RANDOLPH *meets her. They come down toward front of stage, conversing in dumb show.* FRED C., *standing a little aside, watches them meantime.*

MRS. P. I am a soldier's widow, colonel. My late husband graduated here. He was killed in the Wilderness.

COL. C. I might have known it. Ah, madam, soldiering is a rough trade, but it certainly cultivates a fastidiously accurate taste in feminine beauty. Ahem!

MRS. P. Ah, colonel!

MRS. H. Colonel, Nellie wants to see you. The doctor is with her.

MRS. P. Pray let me walk by you, colonel; your strength may fail you again.

COL. C. Madam, you are too gracious. No; let my arm serve you now.

(*Offering arm, which she accepts. They go slowly up stage, evidently deep in compliment.*)

RANDOLPH. Louise, why do you blame me so? It wasn't my fault, you know. You are too hard on me. This is nonsense.

MRS. H. O Randolph, I am nervous—and cross—can't you see? Oh, why do men never understand?

RANDOLPH. Forgive me. I am wrong to worry you now. You ought to be in your room. Come, take my arm—dear.

(*Takes her hand to put it on his arm. She half resists. Just at this moment* COL. C. *and* MRS. P. *have reached the piazza. They turn and see* RANDOLPH *and* MRS. H. MRS. P., *looking pleased, seems to call the* COLONEL'S *attention, who expresses surprise and pleasure.*)

MRS. P. Come, children!

(LOUISE *takes* RANDOLPH'S *arm, and they walk up the stage slowly,* COL. C. *and* MRS. P. *observing them.*)

LT. C. So, that's the game! Careful, good people; I may get a hand in yet.

DROP.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Trophy Point. Mexican guns, etc., in foreground. Hudson River, Crow's Nest, etc., in background.* NELLIE CLAYTON *discovered seated on gun-carriage, with embroidery.*

NELLIE. (*Sol.*) Dear, dear, what a blessing to be alone a little while! Papa is so strange late-

ly. He always used to say the cadets were such a fine set of fellows, and now he won't even let me be introduced to one of them. Ever since Louise came he has done nothing but run down officers, and say how fast they are, and how they drink, and gamble, and never make good husbands. Well, it's a funny world. (*Sighs.*)

Enter WENDELL, R., VON RODEN, L.

WENDELL. (*Aside.*) Halloa, there's the "fem" now. I wonder if it would do for a fellow to speak to her.

VON RODEN. (*Aside.*) Miss Clayton—so! Surely we might for her health inquire.

(NELLIE *looks up and catches* VON RODEN'S *eye. He bows.* NELLIE *half blushes, and turns her head away, and so sees* WENDELL, *who bows. She jumps up in confusion, dropping her work, then sits down again, very much embarrassed.*)

WENDELL. (*Aside.*) Who the deuce is that "file"?

VON RODEN. (*Aside.*) Who may be the with-buttons-covered boy?

(*Both come forward and stoop to pick up her work together. Each gets an end of it, and they stand for an instant holding it and looking at each other.*)

NELLIE. (*Taking her work.*) Oh, thanks!

(*Both bow, and speaking together.*)

WENDELL. Don't you remember me? I nearly killed you this morning.

VON RODEN. You recall me not—naturally. You were unconscious when I carried you this morning.

WENDELL. (*To* VON RODEN.) I beg your pardon.

VON RODEN. (*To* WENDELL.) Excuse me—you spoke.

WENDELL. So it was you who threw me this morning?

VON RODEN. Yes, it was I. When you so clumsily—

WENDELL. You need not have troubled yourself. I could have stopped him.

VON RODEN. (*Doubtingly.*) So!

WENDELL. Yes, sir, so! Your interference was uncalled for. But what does a "cit" know about a cavalry horse. My name is Wendell, sir, U. S. Corps of Cadets, at your service.

NELLIE. Oh! (*Rising.*) Gentlemen!

VON RODEN. So! Ach, yes! I know nothing of the cavalry! Ach, yes! My card, sir.

WENDELL. (*Reading.*) "Graf Friedrich Von Roden, Hauptmann in S. M. des Kaiser's von Deutschland's Garde du Corps." The White Cuirassiers! The devil!

NELLIE. (*Very much alarmed.*) (*Aside.*) Isn't this awful? I must speak. (*Aloud to* WENDELL.) I am so glad to see you, Mr. —— (VON RODEN *looks disgusted.*) (*To* VON RODEN.) Count—— (WENDELL *scowls.*) Oh, dear me, both of you! (*To* WENDELL.) So it was you who nearly killed me this morning—how nice! (*To* VON RODEN.) And you saved my life? I am so grateful to you —I—I cannot say it right! You must see papa.

VON RODEN. It was nothing. Ach, I was well rewarded. I did you in these arms carry.

NELLIE. (*Offended.*) I do not understand you.

VON RODEN. (*Innocently.*) Yes, I do not the English very well speak.

NELLIE. (*To* WENDELL.) But weren't you hurt? They say you had a terrible fall. I should think it would have killed you.

WENDELL. Oh, you can't kill a cadet! I suppose they'll give me five confinements, though.

NELLIE. Oh, for your health?

WENDELL. Oh, no; for dismounting without permission during riding. That's the regular "skin."

NELLIE. (*Bewildered.*) Is it? I didn't know. (*Aside.*) Dear me, his English is worse than the count's!

VON RODEN. (*Cutting in impatiently.*) But it is of no consequence. You were not hurt?

NELLIE. Oh, no, not at all; thanks to your bravery.

WENDELL. It really wasn't my fault. I was riding Graham, and you know how he pulls. Just look at my hands!

NELLIE. Why, they're dreadful! You ought to have them seen to.

WENDELL. Oh, that's nothing! (*Hurrying to make conversation.*) Have you been here long?

NELLIE. Only since last night. And—

WENDELL. Are you coming to the hops?

NELLIE. I should like to; but I am afraid papa will not—

WENDELL. Have you seen the North view? (*Drums outside.*) There goes the first drum; I must be off or I shall get a "late." Good-by, Miss Clayton. I shall see you again, I hope.

(*Bows stiffly to* VON RODEN, *and walks off with great dignity. Drums again. He starts on a run. Exit* WENDELL.)

NELLIE. (*Aside.*) Thank goodness, he's gone without quarrelling! But I can't stay here alone with the other.

VON RODEN. Gott sei dank, the boy with the buttons is gone! I do not like the boy with the buttons. A private soldier so forward. But, ach, these Americans!

NELLIE. He is not a private soldier; he is an officer in our army—a cadet.

VON RODEN. Pardon—I did not know. In our army we have not such.

NELLIE. In your army? Are you a soldier? Oh, dear!

VON RODEN. It displeases you? Well, I am not very much of a soldier—what you call a fair-day soldier. I am in the body-guard of Kaiser-Wilhelm.

NELLIE. The White Cuirassiers. A holiday soldier! You forget Gravelotte.

VON RODEN. Ach no; Gravelotte will I never forget!

NELLIE. (*Aside.*) What would papa say! (*Aloud.*) I think I must go now, Count Von Roden. Good-afternoon.

(*Bowing and going off, leaving her work.* VON RODEN *picks it up.*)

VON RODEN. You are forgetting this, I think.

NELLIE. (*Taking it without stopping.*) Ah, yes—thanks.

VON RODEN. But surely you will not in that so strong sunlight walk? Can we not by that path so leaf-shaded go? And I might offer my arm. Not so?

NELLIE. I—yes—thanks. (*Taking it.*) But you have your hand bandaged. You must have hurt yourself this morning. I am so sorry!

VON RODEN. I am glad for that. Your poet has said the pity is of kin to the love.

NELLIE. (*Aside.*) Now I know he ought not to talk like that. I wish I *could* be dignified. (*Aloud. Withdrawing her hand from his arm.*) Your English is getting very bad again, count.

VON RODEN. (*Composedly drawing her hand back.*) So? This path—has he a name?

NELLIE. They—that is, the cadets, call it Flirtation.

VON RODEN. Flirtation! What is that? I do not know flirtation.

NELLIE. Don't you?

(*Exeunt* NELLIE *and* VON RODEN.)

Enter RANDOLPH *and* LOUISE (MRS. HUNT).

MRS. H. I ought not to have come out; poor Nellie must be so lonesome, shut up in her room.

RANDOLPH. Oh, she's probably asleep! I'm awfully glad you came. You see, I (*hesitating*)—well, I've something to say to you, and it's rather particular and private. But (*laughing nervously*) now you're here, I don't know how to begin.

MRS. H. Now, Randolph, you're not afraid of me, I hope? It's nothing very dreadful, is it?

RANDOLPH. I'm afraid it may seem a little queer. I haven't seen you before for ever so long, and to come out with this the very first day. I don't know how you'll take it.

MRS. H. How can I tell till I know what it is? (*Aside.*) Why don't he speak out? Aunt and that Lieutenant Clayton will be here in a minute.

RANDOLPH. You can't tell how much it worries me. But, then, we've always been good friends, haven't we, Louise? (*Aside.*) Well, here goes. *Aloud.*) Dear Louise, I—

MRS. H. Stop, Randolph! (*Aside.*) How my heart beats! (*Aloud.*) I—I—think I know what you want to tell me.

RANDOLPH. Do you? How did you ever find it out? But so much the better, for upon my word I didn't know how to begin. O Louise, if you only knew!

(*Taking both her hands in his.*)

MRS. H. (*Withdrawing them nervously.*) Don't, Randolph, here!

RANDOLPH. What the mischief did she think I was going to do?

MRS. H. You are dreadfully wild, Randolph.

RANDOLPH. Honestly I will keep straight after this. Fellows always say that, I know. But I mean it. You'll see.

MRS. H. But you're so young!

RANDOLPH. I think that's an excuse for me. I'll never get myself in such a scrape again, though.

MRS. H. What on earth do you mean?

Enter MRS. PENDEXTER *and* FRED CLAYTON. *They stop.*

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) Aunt Ann! Bother!

RANDOLPH. (*Aside.*) My mother! The deuce! (*Turns his back toward her and on the scenery, to which he refers.*) (*Aloud.*) Ahem! The view is very fine from here. I have always thought Crow's Nest shows up so grandly.

(MRS. P. *has indicated in dumb show to* LT. FRED C. *that they must not interrupt. Exeunt* MRS. P. *and* FRED C.)

MRS. H. That will do, Randolph. They've gone.

RANDOLPH. By Jove! so they have. But about what we were talking of. It's all right, I suppose?

MRS. H. I'm sure I don't know what Aunt Ann will say about it.

RANDOLPH. Say about it! Good Heavens, she mustn't know about it! She'd make a fearful row.

MRS. H. But she'll have to know when we're —some time.

RANDOLPH. I don't see why. Not, at any rate, until it's all done and over with.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) An elopement, I declare! (*Aloud.*) Well, there's time enough to think of that. But now, dear, you mustn't make me do it all. Do speak out.

RANDOLPH. It's an awful lot to ask, Louise; but I'll repay you, you know that. You're so awfully rich, you know, and then you seem just like my sister. Mother must turn over my property soon—and—well, less wouldn't do me any good, and if you could lend me five thousand dollars till—

MRS. H. Oh, you mean creature! I hate you!

(*Throws herself on gun-carriage, sobbing.*)

RANDOLPH. What the mischief! I might better have asked the old lady herself. (*Considering.*) What did she think I was going to ask her? Idiot! She couldn't have fancied anything else. She would have said "yes" to that? Good God, what a brute she must think me! And I could love her—I did once—I do now—and I'll tell her so.

(MRS. H. *checks her sobs, and listens to the latter part of this speech.*)

MRS. H. (*Rising with assumed dignity.*) You have shocked me terribly, Randolph. How could you do so mean a thing? Do you not know that a man can sink no lower than to take advantage in this way of my—of a woman's (*hesitating*)—friendship for him?

RANDOLPH. (*Aside.*) Who can understand a woman? (*Aloud.*) Don't be nonsensical. I'm in an awful scrape. I've helped you out of your scrapes since you were so high. You've got

more money than you know what to do with. You know all about my affairs, and you know I'm good for twenty times five thousand. I came to you as a friend I knew was able, and I thought would be glad to help me. I don't see what your sex has to do with it. But no matter; you've taught me a lesson. I'll never put myself in this position again with any one. Mother and I must have a talk. She must understand that I am no longer a child. It's about time. Oh, by the by, you haven't heard it, I suppose, Louise? I am going to be married.

MRS. H. (*Startled.*) What? Who? (*Recovering herself.*) Whom do you propose to honor?

RANDOLPH. Well, I'll tell you. She won't mind your knowing it. But you must promise not to mention it.

MRS. H. Yes, Randolph.

RANDOLPH. (*Glancing round.*) Come closer then, and let me whisper. (*She obeys. He throws his arms about her.*) Your own darling little self—who else? Louise, I love you. Will you be my wife?

MRS. H. (*Extricating herself.*) Randolph, do behave yourself. What a boy you are!

RANDOLPH. No, you have made a man of me. Ah, this love is no sudden fancy! It began when we were children. Why did you marry that old—well, he's dead—gentleman? That

made me reckless. Wasn't it enough? But do you suppose I ever forgot you? Life would be another matter with you for my wife. Will you? Louise, don't trifle with me.

MRS. H. Keep back. Randolph, are you in earnest?

RANDOLPH. As God hears me speak.

MRS. H. Then for better, for worse. (*Throws herself into his arms.*) I can't help it. I do love you.

RANDOLPH. My darling!

MRS. H. Do stop, dear, and listen. I was talked into marrying, but I liked you then; it was just the same with me as with you. Don't, Randolph, it is so public.

RANDOLPH. I say, Louise, let's walk down to Kosciusko's garden, or somewhere where it's shady and—lonesome. We can stay there till parade.

MRS. H. If you wish. You know the legend of the well.

RANDOLPH. Is thy servant a fool? Come.

(*Exeunt.*)

Enter MRS. PENDEXTER *and* FRED CLAYTON.

MRS. P. Certainly if Colonel Clayton were dishonorable enough to keep Louise's fortune because Randolph belongs to a militia regiment, I could not consent to the match.

FRED C. Thanks! Thanks!

MRS. P. What is your interest in the matter?

FRED C. I love her.

MRS. P. And you expect me to help you to take this fortune out of my family?

FRED C. You are unjust to me. I am an officer of the regular army. I certainly come within the terms of the will. My father undoubtedly can and will keep the money, in case she marries me.

MRS. P. Then why on earth do you want to marry her?

FRED C. I love her, not her money.

MRS. P. (*Aside.*) What is his motive? (*Aloud.*) Well, I will see your father; and if he is determined to act so dishonorably, you need no longer regard Randolph as a rival.

FRED C. (*Aside.*) The devil! She'll learn the truth at once.

MRS. P. I don't think, if I can judge from his manner this morning, I shall find much difficulty with him.

FRED C. (*Aside.*) The old crocodile! By Jove! an idea. (*Aloud.*) Ah, madam, even you could hardly turn him now. The fact is—I should not mention it, but really you ought to know it—he is desperately in love with—a certain lady. He is too poor now to dare to offer his hand, but he imagines that with a half million his suit may

prosper. He will seize on any pretext now, however slight, to retain it.

MRS. P. Are you serious? (*Aside.*) I don't believe a word of it.

FRED C. Indeed I am. Mrs. Pendexter, didn't you notice his very marked manner toward you this morning? Didn't you suspect—but no, of course not; who could fancy such presumption?

MRS. P. What! Do you mean to say he wants to marry me? (*Laughs.*)

FRED C. You have guessed it. No wonder you laugh. It is absurd.

MRS. P. Utterly ridiculous.

FRED C. Out of the question, of course. But how well it would arrange matters! I marry Louise; you marry my father. He keeps the money. I cannot, you see, claim it for Louise, as Randolph might. I am made happy, and you will have control of the money, at any rate, during my father's life.

MRS. P. Not a very long lease, I fear.

FRED C. He is not so very old, and after his death you get your widow's portion.

MRS. P. And the bulk of the property will go to—

FRED C. It's rightful owner, Louise. Of course through me as my father's heir.

MRS. P. (*Aside.*) I begin to see. (*Aloud.*) So

this will gives him this property absolutely, in case Louise marries a soldier?

FRED C. Absolutely. To him and his heirs forever is the language.

MRS. P. (*Aside.*) His heirs. Then he can will it—and he shall—to me. (*Aloud.*) But it is too absurd to talk about. Let us return to your affairs, Mr. Clayton. You, I presume, think me a heartless woman of the world. You wrong me. It is my duty to think of my son's interests; but at heart I am all soul—romantic, if you will. Your honest simplicity has won my esteem and your unselfish love has touched my heart. Rely upon my best aid. Randolph shall not stand in your way any longer.

FRED C. (*Aside.*) Game, by Jupiter! (*Aloud.*) How kind you are! You overwhelm me. May I (*kisses her hand*)—mother?

MRS. P. Don't be absurd, Frederick. It is too ridiculous. Ha! ha! ha!

Re-enter RANDOLPH *and* LOUISE, *arm-in-arm.*

RANDOLPH. I wish those two at the well had found some other place to spoon.

MRS. H. How much the girl looked like Nellie. Why, here's your mother! (*Drops his arm.*) Oh, there you are, Aunt Ann! We have been looking for you everywhere.

MRS. P. Too bad you missed us. And you really look tired—quite feverish. You had bet-

ter go back to the house and rest. Mr. Clayton will be glad to escort you.

FRED C. Delighted. (*Offers his arm, which* MRS. H. *doesn't notice.*) Permit me. (*To* RANDOLPH, *as if to take parasol.* RANDOLPH *changes it to other hand.*)

MRS. P. Will you give me your arm, Randolph? (RANDOLPH *hands parasol to* LOUISE, *and obeys reluctantly.*)

MRS. H. Remember, you are to take me to parade, Randolph. I shall be on the piazza.

(*Exit* MRS. H., *followed by* FRED C.)

RANDOLPH. (*Aside, dropping* MRS. P.'S *arm.*) Confound it!

MRS. P. Did you speak, Randolph?

RANDOLPH. Oh, well, mother, I don't see the use of being rude to Louise!

MRS. P. Rude! I never was rude in my life. I have something to say to you that must be said at once. I have noticed with great anxiety your very marked attention to Louise.

RANDOLPH. Anxiety! Why, I thought you—

MRS. P. I hesitated to speak, it is true. I should have warned you sooner. But it is not too late.

RANDOLPH. I should say it was—rather.

MRS. P. What do you mean?

RANDOLPH. Only that we're engaged, that's all. O mother, I'm the happiest—

MRS. P. Engaged—you and Louise?

RANDOLPH. It's a solemn fact; but what's the matter?

MRS. P. How dared you take such a step without my knowledge? It shall not be.

RANDOLPH. Mother! May I ask you if you know precisely what you are talking about?

MRS. P. Randolph, drop this tone at once. I will not submit to it. I forbid this engagement. Do you understand me?

RANDOLPH. No, I don't. (*Aside.*) Now for it. (*Aloud.*) But you may as well understand me. I am of age. I am independent. I love Louise; and in plain English, unless you have some very good reason for it, I don't care a rap whether you forbid the engagement or not.

MRS. P. You are both impertinent and vulgar. But you shall know my reason. My son, in that marriage you would trifle with your honor, with the honor of the Pendexters.

RANDOLPH. Now, what may that mean in English?

MRS. P. Randolph, you are a soldier.

RANDOLPH. Am I?

MRS. P. You are still a member of your regiment?

RANDOLPH. Of course. But what's that got to do with—

MRS. P. One moment. Listen to me. All that Louise has came from her late husband; and his

will provides that if she marries a soldier, it is all to go to Colonel Clayton.

RANDOLPH. Is it much ?

MRS. P. Half a million ; and if you inveigle her into marrying you she will lose every cent of it.

RANDOLPH. The deuce ! But aren't you assuming a good deal ? Unless Colonel Clayton is very different from any other army man I ever met, he will never acknowledge that militia men are soldiers, even for half a million of money.

MRS. P. He *is* different. He is grasping, crafty, ambitious. He will seize on any pretext to keep this money. He will be only too well pleased with this engagement. He will do his best to forward the match. Be warned. Do not let him deceive you. The day you marry her sees her penniless. She is young and thoughtless. You are a man, and must think for both. Ask yourself is it right, is it honorable of you, wilfully, knowingly, to help this man rob her of her all?

RANDOLPH. You put it strongly. You are right. It would never do. But there's a very simple way out of the difficulty. I can easily leave the regiment—get dropped from the rolls. Where would Colonel Clayton be then ?

MRS. P. Randolph ! It is my son speaks thus ? Leave your regiment ? Desert your colors ? Can a Pendexter be pointed out as a coward—a deserter ?

RANDOLPH. Nonsense, mother! We're not in the face of the enemy. Of course I couldn't think of it if there were any prospect of a row; but now, pshaw! I'll write to-night.

MRS. P. (*Aside.*) What is to be done?

Enter JIM.

JIM. Mars Pendexter, telegram for you, sah. Operator say him important, sah. Hard time finding you, sah.

RANDOLPH. All right, Jim. Here!

JIM. Thank you, sah.

(*Exit* JIM.)

RANDOLPH. Excuse me, mother. (*Opens and reads telegram.*) Hurrah!—but Louise?

MRS. P. What has happened?

RANDOLPH. Read it. Something to do at last.

MRS. P. (*Reads.*) "Notify your squad, and report at armory to-night. Fatigue, knapsack, and overcoat rolled. Riot duty. Quite the row looked for. Wire answer. BACON, First Sergeant." (*Aside.*) Thank Heaven! (*Aloud.*) O Randolph, must you go?

RANDOLPH. I should rather think so. I should be the only man absent in the regiment, if I didn't.

MRS. P. And Louise?

RANDOLPH. Well, I can't help it. I can't get out until this is over.

MRS. P. Can you ever get out with honor?

This call came suddenly. Another may come at any time. After this, if you leave, can they not say that you are afraid of more of it?

RANDOLPH. Mother, you are right. I am a soldier—a citizen soldier, I know; but when calls like this may come at any time, I cannot quit my colors with honor. But I will not help to rob Louise; I will do my duty.

MRS. P. Here she comes. Do it; God bless you, my son! (*Kisses him and exit.*)

RANDOLPH. Already! What shall I say to her? Oh, for a little time to think!

Enter LOUISE (MRS. HUNT).

MRS. H. Well, sir, have you forgotten our engagement, altogether. But what's the matter? Aren't you well, dear?

RANDOLPH. Louise, don't! I—Louise, everything is at an end. I cannot love you. We must forget each other.

MRS. H. Randolph—but you are joking.

RANDOLPH. No; I couldn't do that. It's hard lines, but I see no way out of it. I must give you up. Don't, dear; I'm not worth it. It isn't my doing. Well, never mind all that. It's come to good-by. (*Kissing her.*) I've no right to that. But it's the last.

(*Exit* RANDOLPH.)

MRS. H. Randolph, Randolph! Oh, my heart!

Ah, this is too cruel, too hard! I can't bear it! (*Falls weeping on gun.*) (*After a pause.*) What can it mean? Not his doing—no, no. I feel how he loves me. He is in some terrible trouble. I don't know what he has done, but I do know I love him. Ah, dear, I may not be your wife, but they cannot stop my loving you. If ever he should want a friend or help—but what can I do? Ah, the money! I can do that, and I will, now more than ever.

Enter COL. CLAYTON.

COL. C. Mrs. Hunt, have you seen Nellie? The child's not in her room. Eh! What! You've been crying.

MRS. H. Oh, no—the sun in my eyes—

COL. C. Stuff! Don't tell me. Something's wrong. Has that confounded son of mine—

MRS. H. Oh, no, sir. Not him.

COL. C. Not him? Who, then? Come, child, tell me all about it. Think I'm your father. I am all the father you've got. (*Sits beside her and puts one arm behind her. She rests her face on his shoulder and cries a little.*) There—that's right. Tell me.

MRS. H. It's—it's about—it's Randolph.

COL. C. Eh! Pendexter! The young—what's he been doing?

MRS. H. He—he told me he—he loved me.

COL. C. The infernal scamp!

MRS. H. And he made me say I—I'd marry him.

COL. C. (*Jumping up.*) The hound! The—(*Calming down.*) But where's the harm? I thought (*sitting down*)—don't you like him?

MRS. H. I—yes—I do—but—

COL. C. Then what is there to cry about? He's not a soldier, is he? Of course not. I give my consent. There, it's all right. You haven't changed your mind since, have you?

MRS. H. No; he's changed his.

COL. C. (*Jumping up again.*) What! By the Lord Harry, he is a scoundrel! Leave this to me. Where is he? By Jove, I'll—

MRS. H. (*Rising.*) Stop; you don't understand. There is some dreadful mystery. We were so happy, and Aunt Ann came down and sent me away. I saw him after, and he was so strange. He told me I must forget him—and—left me. And I know he likes me.

COL. C. He's got a devilish odd way of showing it, then. What did he say?

MRS. H. Hardly anything, I think, but good-by. I remember that.

COL. C. Pshaw, there's some mistake! I heard at the office he had been called suddenly to New York. He was upset—had to leave you—didn't know what he was saying; you mistook him.

MRS. H. I wish I could think so. I don't know what to make of it. There must be a mistake somewhere.

COL. C. Of course; why, what else can there be? His mother, I know, is in favor of the match. So am I. He's a fine fellow, not a soldier. Just the thing. I feel myself rid of your property already. I'll soon set this to rights. Cheer up. Trust me.

MRS. H. I believe you are right. Do as you will. I trust it to you. But about another matter. I want a little money, if you please, guardian. (*Playfully.*)

COL. C. (*Drawing out pocketbook.*) Certainly; how much?

MRS. H. Five thousand dollars, please.

COL. C. (*Putting back pocketbook.*) Five—why, I haven't got it, Mrs. Hunt. In fact, I haven't any money of yours now. You know I gave you all that came in on the first of the month.

MRS. H. I know, but I want it. With all that money it ought to be easy enough to get five thousand dollars. There are the Governments. They're just the same as money, aren't they?

COL. C. But I can't touch them, you know. They're part of the principal.

MRS. H. But it's mine, and I want it. Give me five of the bonds.

COL. C. But I can't. Good Heavens, you

mustn't think of such a thing! I can't violate my trust. You must understand that.

MRS. H. But I don't understand at all. They're mine, and I want them particularly. Please give them to me.

COL. C. They are not yours nor mine. All I have to do with them is to keep them safe. You know I do that. You know where I keep that chest. You know the keys never go out of my possession. Here they—eh! What! Ah, here they are. (*Taking them out of his pocketbook and showing them.*) And here they stay. (*Putting them back, drops one of them, which* MRS. H. *immediately stands over.*) You understand now, don't you?

MRS. H. Oh, yes. Forgive me for troubling you. You see, we women are so helpless in matters of business.

COL. C. To be sure! To be sure! But you'll learn. You'll soon be as careful as I am. But I must see Pendexter before he leaves. (*Aside, going.*) Tell me I'm not business-like, will they?

(MRS. H. *picks up the key.*)

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) Ah ha, colonel, I may not understand business, but— (*Holding up key.* COL. C. *turns to come back.*) Good gracious, I hope he didn't see me! (*Slipping key into her bosom.*) Well, I won't give it back again, so now!

COL. C. I forgot to say that if the money is really necessary, Mrs. Hunt, I can raise it personally for you.

MRS. H. Oh, dear, no. I won't trouble you. But I must go back to the house. So much obliged to you. (*Aside, going.*) He is a good old thing, and it's a shame—but Randolph!

(*Exit* MRS. H.)

COL. C. (*Sol.*) What an inexperienced child it is! But docile. Only needs to be reasoned with by a cool, clear-headed business man. And now for Pendexter. I'll have no trouble with him. Just talk to him calmly. I never lose my head, nor my temper, either.

Enter RANDOLPH *in full Seventh Regiment fatigue uniform. Salutes in passing.*

COL. C. (*Salutes mechanically. Aside.*) What the devil uniform's that? (*Aloud.*) Here, corporal. Why, Pendexter — what the mischief— why are you masquerading in that damned Confederate gray?

RANDOLPH. I don't understand you, sir.

COL. C. Do you mean to insult me, sir—to insult the whole post by flaunting those infernal rebel rags?

RANDOLPH. It's not a Confederate uniform, sir, and if it were no man should blackguard it. My father wore the gray, and died in it.

COL. C. Why, hang it all, man, your mother told me he was a graduate.

RANDOLPH. So he was, and an officer in the Confederate army.

COL. C. The Confederate army! And I've been doing the civil to a confounded she-traitor! infernal old—but that accounts for it. Treason was born in you. That accounts for your conduct to my ward. What the devil do you mean by it, sir?

RANDOLPH. I have no explanation to make to you, sir.

COL. C. You young—but there, I will be calm. Let's get to facts. Don't you mean to marry her?

RANDOLPH. I do not.

COL. C. Damnation, sir—but I won't lose my temper. Why? Why, in the fiend's name? Why?

RANDOLPH. Because I am a soldier, and because I see through you.

COL. C. What! You a soldier! Well, that ends it, of course. Confound the luck! I didn't know you were in the army.

RANDOLPH. I'm not. I belong to the State troops.

COL. C. The militia! O Lord! Ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, Pendexter, you militia fellows are all very well, of course, but soldiers—oh, this is too absurd!

RANDOLPH. (*Sternly.*) Spare your acting, sir. Half a million would induce you to call us soldiers.

COL. C. Confound you, what do you mean? Oh, this is only a pretext! But I won't have it. You're not a soldier, never were, never will be, you nor any other popinjay who parades Broadway in a laced monkey-jacket, and don't know the butt end of a gun from the muzzle.

RANDOLPH. And I say we are soldiers, and the regular army can't show better. I'm going now where my regiment may do something to change your mind. But I'll not give you the chance to rob Louise by changing it. I know your schemes. Mark that, Colonel Clayton. No more, sir; I have no time to waste.

(*Draws himself up into the position of the soldier. Salutes. Executes about face and exit.*)

COL. C. (*Salutes automatically.*) Confound his impudence! He a soldier! What next? Target companies, I suppose. He almost made me angry. And that old hypocrite of a mother! Followed the camp and stripped the wounded, no doubt. They're a bad lot. But the money? I thought I was rid of it. By Jove! that reminds me I haven't counted the bonds to-day. This will never do.

(*Exit* COL. C.)

Enter MRS. HUNT *hastily, with a handful of bonds concealed under her wrap.*

MRS. H. I've got them. Oh, how nervous I am! I wonder if real thieves feel like this? But they're my own; I don't care what Colonel Clayton says. (*Showing them.*) I hope I've got enough. I didn't stop to count. Good gracious, here's somebody coming!

(*Stuffs the bonds into her pocket and tries to look unconcerned.*)

Enter MRS. PENDEXTER.

MRS. P. Louise, where have you been? Why didn't you stay with Fred—Mr. Clayton? He is very much annoyed at the rude way in which you treated him.

MRS. H. Well, why would he be such a goose? Do you suppose I'd listen to him, after Randolph?

MRS. P. Randolph! Hasn't Randolph told you?

MRS. H. What? Then you knew what he was to say to me! You knew! You prompted him! It is your doing! (*Great hubbub outside.*)

COL. C. (*Without.*) I've been robbed! I'll rouse the post! Thieves!

MRS. H. Good Heavens!

Enter COL. CLAYTON *and* FRED CLAYTON.

COL. C. Where's the proprietor? Where's the officer of the day?

LT. C. Do control yourself, sir.

COL. C. Mind your own business! I've been robbed, I tell you! Mrs. Hunt, you here? You've been robbed! My room has been entered and your bonds stolen! It is outrageous! Where the deuce are the police? Where is the guard?

MRS. H. Never mind, colonel, it's not very serious. (*Aside.*) Oh, dear, I ought not to have said that!

MRS. P. Don't talk like a fool, Louise. This is a very strange story, colonel.

COL. C. What the devil do you mean, madam?

FRED C. By the by, where's your son, Mrs. Pendexter?

MRS. P. He has just left for New York.

FRED C. Hm! Rather odd coincidence. His room is next to yours, father.

MRS. H. Oh, how dare you! (*Feeling in pocket for bonds.* MRS. P. *interrupts.*)

MRS. P. What! what! Do you mean to insinuate that my son—oh, you—you miserable Yankee hireling, how dare you say such a thing of a Virginian gentleman! (*To* COL. C.) And you stand and listen to him. More likely you took them yourself. Yes. You stole enough in Virginia—cotton, silver, jewelry—a pack of your thieves stripped my plantation. You are none too good to steal bonds.

COL. C. Enough, madam! We don't care for

any more rebel yell at present. I don't believe Pendexter took the bonds, and, by Jove, Fred, it was a blackguard thing for you to say. Not but what he's got rebel blood enough in him, but there are some things a gentleman can't do. And you, you old — madam. Ugh! I'm disgusted with myself to think that this morning I actually offered my arm to a rampant she-rebel. You'd better go, I think, madam, or I'll say something I ought to be sorry for.

MRS. P. Come, Louise; this is no place for us. We will leave these *gentlemen*.

MRS. H. But, aunt, I—

MRS. P. Come, I say. We have both been deceived. (*To* FRED C.) Oh, you—you—I'll pay you well for the trick you've served me.

(*Exeunt* MRS. H. *and* MRS. P.)

COL. C. Fred, why the mischief can't you keep your temper? I always do.

FRED C. Oh, I know. But what's to be done?

COL C. I've roused the hotel. The bonds must have been taken within the last half hour, and they're searching the grounds now.

(*Conversation continued in dumb show.*)

Enter VON RODEN *and* NELLIE CLAYTON *arm-in-arm.*

NELLIE. Well, did I pronounce it properly then?

VON RODEN. Try it just one time again. Ich liebe dich.

NELLIE. How tiresome you are! Then you must tell me what it means. Ich liebe dich. Now, I know that was right. Good gracious, papa and Fred! They mustn't see us. You keep in the path till they're gone. I'll run back to the house.

(*Exit* NELLIE. VON RODEN *hesitates, then exit.*)

FRED C. Well, if he isn't found? I'd best hunt up the officer of the day at once. It isn't his business, but still under the circumstances—

JIM. (*Without.*) Oh, come right along, sah! No use making no trouble, sah! This way, sah!

COL. C. Halloa! what's this?

Enter JIM *and another boy,* VON RODEN *between them.*

By Jove, they've got him!

JIM. Here he is, sah! Him sneakin' in de brush. Yah! yah! Here's de t'ief. Ow—

(*This howl is occasioned by* VON RODEN, *who, breaking the other waiter's hold on his left arm, knocks* JIM *down.*)

VON RODEN. Thief! Himmel-kreuz-donner-wetter!

COL. C. Seize him, you black fools!

JIM. (*On ground.*) Ow, I'se dead! I is!

(*Other waiter stands irresolute.*)

VON RODEN. Seize him! Ah, yes, seize him! Thief! Mein Gott!

(COL. C. *and* FRED *rush in on him. He raises heavy stick. They pause.*)

VON RODEN. (*Aside.*) Her father! (*Aloud.*) Stand fast, gentlemen! Not even you can insult me unpunished, but we must not quarrel. I go now, but when all is calmer I will come back to you. Never fear. (*Going leisurely.*)

COL. C. Confound it, Fred, stop him! Don't stand there like a fool. (VON RODEN *pauses.*)

FRED C. I've no notion of getting my head broken for nothing. He'll never get past the guard at the gate.

COL. C. You're afraid of him! By Jove, I'll do it myself!

(*Springs forward, but is held back by* FRED.)

COL. C. Stop, you infernal thief!

(VON RODEN *starts, but controls himself, and stands while* COL. C. *struggles to reach him.*)

DROP.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The upper road near the riding-hall and Custer monument.*

(MRS. PENDEXTER *and* MRS. HUNT *walking.*)

MRS. P. I acted from the purest motives, Louise. I knew nothing of Colonel Clayton. You know it is my dearest wish to see you and Randolph united, but I thought it my duty to prevent you from throwing away your fortune, even for him.

MRS. H. As if I cared for the money. I never even thought of it.

MRS. P. Probably not. You are very thoughtless. That is why I had to think for you.

MRS. H. The idea of any one suspecting my dear old colonel. No more honorable man ever breathed. The fear that I may fall in love with a soldier while with him, and so give people an excuse to say things about him, never leaves him a moment.

MRS. P. Well, you know him best, of course. And, after all, Randolph is not really a soldier.

MRS. H. No, I suppose not. I wish he'd come. Isn't it almost time for the boat?

MRS. P. It's after time.

MRS. H. Isn't that unusual? Oh, perhaps he's been hurt!

MRS. P. If he were that would hardly delay the boat. Besides, he would have mentioned it in his dispatch. See, all he says is, "Row over. All right. Up in Powell." Dear Randolph's style is so very abrupt.

MRS. H. Oh, here comes the stage! I see him; why don't he look?

MRS. P. He sees us. He's stopping the stage. Here he comes.

Enter RANDOLPH.

MRS. P. My boy!

RANDOLPH. Safe and sound, mother. But Louise—with you—to meet me!

MRS. H. Won't you shake hands with me, Randolph?

MRS. P. I was deceived about Colonel Clayton. I advised you mistakenly. See, Louise forgives you. Go and shake hands.

RANDOLPH. Shake hands—Louise!

MRS. H. Randolph. (*They embrace.*)

MRS. P. (*Aside.*) I think I can be spared. (*Aloud.*) I will walk over to parade. Don't be late to tea, children.

(*Exit* MRS. P.)

MRS. H. And I never knew where you were going. But aren't you the least little bit hurt? It would be so nice to nurse you.

RANDOLPH. Not a scratch ; and never fired a shot. But two men in the Ninth were killed, though. It was very lively for a minute or two. But never mind that. Darling, how can you forgive me ?

MRS. H. You acted nobly, generously ; but how could you ? And so foolish. Dear old colonel ! He never had a dishonorable thought in his life.

RANDOLPH. So mother has told you all about it. She seems to have changed her mind very suddenly. I don't exactly seem to understand her. It strikes me I'd better not try. I've got you back again—never mind the rest.

MRS. H. And, Randolph—about that money. I've got it for you.

RANDOLPH. What money ?

MRS. H. The five thousand dollars you spoke of yesterday.

RANDOLPH. Haven't you forgotten that ? I wish you would. I'm awfully ashamed of it.

MRS. H. I don't see why you should be. It's as much yours as mine now. Here they are.

RANDOLPH. What's this ?

MRS. H. Some of my bonds.

RANDOLPH. Your bonds ! I thought Colonel Clayton had them. Louise, you haven't told him what I said ?

MRS. H. Oh, no! I just told him I wanted five of the bonds, and he wouldn't let me have them, and talked about trusts and all sorts of nonsense. I thought it was horrid of him, so I just went to his room and took them. And he missed them, and oh, we've had such a time!

RANDOLPH. Well, this is a delightful piece of business. Let me see them. Why, you've got at least two dozen. So Colonel Clayton leaves trifles of this sort lying around in his bedroom at a hotel. You are a very business-like pair. Louise, what do you suppose is going to become of you if you go on in this dreadful way?

MRS. H. Aren't you pleased?

RANDOLPH. Pleased! I'm delighted, astonished at the range of your accomplishments. I'll take charge of these, I think, and hand them back to the colonel, with some cock-and-bull story to account for my having them.

MRS. H. But I thought you would be glad. Did I do anything wrong, dear? They're my own, you know. Did I?

RANDOLPH. No; you did splendidly. You did it for me, and it's a shame to tease you. And now suppose the enterprising burglar gives the receiver of the stolen goods a kiss. (*She resists.*) Just one.

MRS. H. No, sir, not after laughing at me.

Not another one. Well, there! Now we must hurry back or we'll be late for tea.

(*Scene changes to the camp, illuminated for band-practice, military band, ladies and cadets promenading, moonlight, etc., etc. Guard walking post. Chorus of cadets without.* WENDELL, *as cadet officer of the guard, seated with* NELLIE C., *evidently deep in flirtation. A pause in the music.*)

NELLIE. (*Both rising.*) Oh, Mr. Wendell, I am so sorry! I never thought of this. I'm nothing but a little girl yet, and you are—but here comes some one.

Enter VON RODEN *in full uniform, as an officer of the White Cuirassiers.*

VON RODEN. Good-evening, Miss Nellie.

WENDELL. I must go back to my duty, Miss Clayton. Good-by.

NELLIE. Good-by. (*Exit* WENDELL.)

VON RODEN. I am late, I know. Have you waited long?

(*They sit down. Song again, during which* VON RODEN *and* NELLIE *are evidently making love. Music stops.*)

VON RODEN. (*Rising.*) Now you know all my heart. It was wrong of me to speak. I should have seen your father first. That is our way.

NELLIE. (*Roguishly.*) I don't think much of your way. I mean that way. You know what I mean. I like to speak for myself. American girls all do.

VON RODEN. Then speak. You know I love you. Do you—will you—

NELLIE. (*Rising, confused.*) No, that is—I won't say now. Go to papa. I—I allow you. (*Holding out her hand, which he kisses.*) Oh, here he comes!

Enter COL. CLAYTON *and* FRED CLAYTON, *the latter in full uniform.*

COL. C. Nellie, Mrs. Hunt has been looking for you everywhere.

NELLIE. Papa, this is Fritz—Count Von Roden—the gentleman who stopped the horse.

COL. C. My dear sir, I still owe you my thanks, and must take this opportunity—

VON RODEN. (*Pleasantly but with dignity.*) A moment, sir. Something you do owe me—not thanks—that was nothing—but an apology. Doubtless it was some error, but you called me thief, and I cannot, you see, take your hand yet.

COL. C. Thief! Me! I deny it, sir.

FRED C. By Jove, I thought I knew him! It's the fellow who escaped us yesterday.

VON RODEN. Escaped! Kreuz-donnerwetter!

COL. C. What, the rascal who stole the bonds! You infernal scoundrel—

(VON RODEN *unhooks his scabbard mechanically, but restrains himself.*)

FRED C. Stop, father! Let me speak. Count Von Roden, if that is what you call yourself, yesterday afternoon a large sum in Government bonds was stolen from my father's room in the hotel. Ten minutes afterward you were found lurking in the shrubbery near the house. You were seized, and broke away forcibly. Now explain this if you can. You were the only stranger about at the time. Where were you when these bonds were stolen? Who were you with? Why were you hiding?

VON RODEN. But this is ridiculous: me, an imperial officer, a count of the Empire, a thief!

COL. C. Confound it! How do we know what you are?

VON RODEN. Observe that I bear much from you. I humiliate myself, but I will explain. It is very simple. I was walking with—

NELLIE. (*Aside to* VON RODEN.) Oh, goodness, don't!

VON RODEN. No, I have nothing to say.

COL. C. By Jove!

LT. C. I thought so.

VON RODEN. I will no more of this bear. You, sir (*to* COL. C.), are to me sacred. To you,

sir (*to* FRED C.), I will be very glad to give satisfactory explanations when and where you will. You understand me ?

NELLIE. (*To* VON RODEN.) Von Roden, it's my brother.

LT. C. Bah ! I think we've had enough of this. (*To sentry.*) Guard there, call the officer of the guard.

GUARD. (*Calling.*) Officer of the guard, number three !

NELLIE. O Fred, how horrid of you !

Enter WENDELL, *running. Guard salutes.* WENDELL *returns it quickly. Guard ports arms.*

WENDELL. What is it, Mr. Hodges ? What do you mean by bawling in that style, sir ?

LT. C. I had you called, sir. (*They salute.*) This man is a thief. Will you kindly see that he does not pass your guard until we can have him arrested ?

WENDELL. (*Saluting, which* FRED *returns.*) Certainly, sir. (*To* VON RODEN.) You will come with me.

(VON RODEN *starts and half draws his sword.* HODGES *drops his piece to the charge and approaches.*)

WENDELL. What do you mean by leaving your

post, Mr. Hodges? (HODGES *turns back, holding his piece at a charge.*) Carry arms!

(HODGES *carries*, WENDELL *advances resolutely toward* VON RODEN.)

NELLIE. (*Throwing herself between them.*) Oh, stop, stop! I will speak if he won't. Mr. Wendell, you know you left me with this gentleman at Trophy Point yesterday afternoon, just before battalion drill.

WENDELL. Yes, I did.

NELLIE. Well, from that time until after the bonds were taken he was with me.

COL. C. With you? Where? Why, you were in your room!

NELLIE. We were in "Flirtation." Coming back, I saw you. You were angry, and I was afraid you would scold me for—for being out of my room. So I went back to the house, and I asked him to wait a little while—and he did—and that's all—and I think it's just horrid of you to make me tell it before (*glancing at* WENDELL) everybody—there!

WENDELL. I think I am not needed. Good-evening, Miss Clayton.

NELLIE. (*Emphatically.*) Good-by, Mr. Wendell. (*Exit* WENDELL.)

COL. C. Nellie! Child! What does this mean? You alone with this stranger? I don't understand.

VON RODEN. Now it is for me to speak. But first, you see that for calling me thief, you must apologize.

COL. C. (*Restraining himself with an effort.*) I do, sir. I withdraw the word. (*Quickly.*) But, mark me, only for this. I am going to call you something worse, and I am not going to bar myself from accepting the challenge you will offer me. (*Bursting out.*) Now, you infernal—

VON RODEN. Stop there! Listen. I am a gentleman—an officer in the German army—a nobleman in my own country. I saved your daughter's life. I love her. (*Lifting his helmet ceremoniously.*) Sir, I have the honor of demanding the hand of your daughter.

FRED C. Confound your impudence—

VON RODEN. Silence, you! God knows if you were not her brother—

COL. C. Fred, mind your own business. He has addressed me like a gentleman, and must be answered like one. (*Lifting his hat ceremoniously.*) Sir, I have the distinguished honor of declining your flattering proposal.

Enter RANDOLPH, MRS. HUNT, *and* MRS. PENDEXTER.

NELLIE. Father!

COL. C. But, confound it, child, I don't even know who he is. You're crazy.

RANDOLPH. (*Aside to* MRS. H.) What's up here? By Jove, it's Von Roden!

FRED C. (*Seeing* RANDOLPH *and* MRS. H.) Together again! Perdition!

VON RODEN. (*To* COL. C.) The German consulate can inform you.

RANDOLPH. I can save it the trouble. Von Roden, old man, how are you? Where did you drop from?

VON RODEN. Randolph, my friend, you here! This is good. Now do me a favor. Present me in form to Colonel Clayton.

RANDOLPH. Certainly. Colonel Clayton, ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor of presenting to you my friend, Friedrich Von Roden, commonly known as Long Fritz, Baron Von Roden, of Schloss Rodenstein, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, hereditary grand falconer to His Serene Majesty the King of Prussia, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. He wears his present somewhat gorgeous apparel not because he is under the impression that this is a fancy-dress ball, but because it is the uniform of the White Cuirassiers, the body-guard of the Emperor of Germany, in which corps he holds the rank of captain, having been promoted for gallantry at Gravelotte. We had the mutual honor of rooming together at Heidelberg, and as he seems to be an object of general interest, let me say, from personal observation,

that he is a remarkably decent fellow—for a Dutchman—and I am proud to call him my friend. (*Grasps his hand. Aside to* VON RODEN.) How's that, old man ?

VON RODEN. Confount you, Pendexter !

COL. C. Count Von Roden, I am proud to know you. Allow me now to apologize most sincerely for my absurd rudeness. My son will, I am sure, follow my example.

(*They shake hands cordially.* FRED C. *bows sulkily.* VON RODEN *haughtily.*)

RANDOLPH. Rudeness ! Apologies ! What's this ?

VON RODEN (*Laughing.*) Colonel Clayton has been giving me the credit of stealing some bonds of his.

RANDOLPH. (*Laughing.*) You ! Well, with twenty thousand a year you ought to be above that. But, then, you always were a suspicious-looking character. By the by, speaking of bonds, here's something for you, colonel.

COL. C. The bonds ! Where did you get them ?

MRS. H. The bonds ! Randolph !

NELLIE. I'm so glad !

LT. C. I thought so.

RANDOLPH. Yes, colonel, the bonds. Excuse these tears. In a moment of weakness I yielded. But remorse seized me—when I found they were registered. I return them. Take them, sir, and

take a word of advice. Hereafter, don't keep them in your bedroom. (*Laughs.*)

COL. C. What the devil does this mean, Pendexter ?

MRS. P. Randolph, this is past a joke. You have been suspected. Yes, Randolph, you, and by him. (*Pointing to* FRED C.) Tell the true story.

RANDOLPH. I'll be hanged if I will ! If anybody chooses to be infernal fool enough to think me a thief, he's welcome to his opinion.

VON RODEN. (*Slapping him on the back.*) Hast recht !

MRS. H. Oh, these men ! Guardian, do you remember a little talk we had yesterday. Something was said about woman's inability to help herself in business matters. You remember you showed me two keys. Pardon my weak feminine curiosity, won't you, and let me see them again.

COL. C. Eh ! What ! Of course, if you wish. Here they are. (*Produces one. Searching pockets.*) I know I've got it somewhere. Where the deuce is that other key ?

MRS. H. Here, sir. (*Producing key.*)

COL. C. Where did you get that ?

MRS. H. On Trophy Point, where you dropped it. I didn't think that a very safe place for it, so I picked it up. And while I had it I just thought I would test my business capacity ; I found I

could help myself, and I did, as you see. (*Indicating the bonds which* COL. C. *still holds in his hands.*) I gave them to Randolph this evening, and told him to give them back to you with a few appropriate remarks upon the care of valuables.

RANDOLPH. (*Aside.*) Well, that's one kind of truth.

COL. C. Randolph, eh! Why, I thought you and Pendexter—

MRS. H. Oh, you are thinking of that conversation again. I believe there was something said about Randolph. But I thought, as I had succeeded so well in business matters, I might as well look after my other affairs, too. I am glad I did. (*Takes* RANDOLPH'S *arm, smiling.*)

COL. C. Ha! Very amusing indeed! Now what does it all mean?

RANDOLPH. I'll explain. But first, sir, we must settle one disputed point. Am I or am I not a soldier?

COL. C. Soldier, sir! No, sir! You're a militia-man, and no militia-man ever was or ever will be a soldier.

RANDOLPH. That settles the question. Now I suppose you won't mind my taking this load (*indicating* MRS. H.) off your hands. The fact is, colonel, if this thing goes on much longer your carefulness will be the death of you; so just

to save you trouble, you know, Louise and I thought we'd get married.

MRS. H. Don't believe his nonsense. You're the dearest old guardian in the world (*dropping* RANDOLPH'S *arm and taking the colonel's*), and you're not going to get rid of me altogether, I assure you. But you see (*whispering*) I'm pretty sure I love him, and I'm awfully sure he loves me.

COL. C. (*Dropping her arm.*) Mrs. Hunt—Louise, my dear child, I'm delighted. Pendexter, you're a lucky fellow, and, egad! you're a fine fellow. Now get married as soon as you can, and have a receipt ready for these damn—I beg pardon, ladies—bonds I should say, as soon as the ceremony is over.

RANDOLPH. I have to beg your pardon, sir, for all I said yesterday.

COL. C. Not at all, my dear boy. I was the one. I lost my temper, sir, for the first time in my life. I apologize to you. Now go and get congratulated.

(*During this conversation* COL. C., RANDOLPH, *and* LOUISE *hold the centre of the stage.* LT. C. *is in the rear of* COL. C. *and to his left. Farther left is* MRS. P. *Right are* NELLIE *and* VON RODEN. RANDOLPH *and* LOUISE *turn, and all come forward as they speak.*)

MRS. P. (*To* LOUISE, *kissing her.*) My daughter!

NELLIE. (*To* LOUISE.) O Louise, I'm so glad! (*Sighing.*) How fortunate you are!

LT. C. (*Aside.*) The game's up. However, I'm safe; the old lady dare not speak.

VON RODEN. Randolph, old comrade, I envy you.

LT. C. (*Advancing.*) Pendexter, I congratulate you. Half a million—you're a lucky dog.

MRS. P. Stop! Do not take that man's hand, Randolph. I have something to tell you.

FRED. C. (*Aside to* MRS. P.) Careful, madam; I have as much to tell as you. Think!

MRS. P. (*Hesitating, and evidently not saying what she meant to.*) Randolph, he accused you of having stolen those bonds.

FRED C. Mrs. Pendexter, I! You must have misunderstood me in the excitement.

COL. C. Madam, both my son and myself said many things then liable to misconstruction; but believe me, neither he nor I were ever lacking in any degree in respect and esteem for your son, and admiration for yourself. Pardon any hasty words in which you found offensive meaning, which I assure you, if it existed, was utterly unintended and unmeant.

MRS. P. Colonel, you are more than courteous. I accept your assurances, and beg to return them.

RANDOLPH. (*To* FRED C.) Why, of course you never thought of such a thing. Shake hands, old man.

FRED C. Father, if you don't need me, I think I'll retire. I don't seem to feel altogether well. Good-night, all. (*Aside, going.*) And this is the result of strategy, the way not to do it.

(*Exit* FRED C.)

VON RODEN. Colonel Clayton, you now know my name and my position. Will you let me renew my proposal? Not so?

COL. C. Mrs. Pendexter, what shall I say to this persistent young gentleman?

MRS. P. What is his proposal?

COL. C. He wants to marry my daughter, that's all.

MRS. P. I should, in that case, simply refer him to the lady.

VON RODEN. Oh, thanks, madam, thanks!

COL. C. Nellie, come here.

(NELLIE *advances timidly*, VON RODEN *meets her, and puts her arm through his.*)

MRS. P. (*Aside to* COLONEL.) We know all about him. A most eligible *parti* in every respect.

COL. C. Nellie, what has Count Von Roden been saying to you.

NELLIE. I—I don't know.

MRS. P. The most important question is, what she said to him.

NELLIE. He says I said "ja," but I didn't; I said "yes."

COL. C. (*Gravely.*) Nellie, do you love this gentleman?

NELLIE. Papa, I do.

COL. C. Count Von Roden, I believe you to be a brave soldier and an honorable gentleman. I know you are noble and wealthy. I must yet learn whether you are the man to make my little girl happy. Let us know you better; let us see you often; travel with us if you can this summer; and by and by come with Nellie to me again, both in the same mind, and we'll talk it over.

VON RODEN. I thank you, sir. I could ask no more. (NELLIE *and* VON RODEN *retire to left. Aside to* NELLIE.) I would like to shake the hand of the cadet who overran you that day. He is a fine fellow.

NELLIE. Poor Wendell!

COL. C. Mrs. Pendexter, let us congratulate each other. We have tried to do right, and we have our reward in these children's happiness. By Jove, madam, your conduct has been most admirable! I have heard much of the high feeling, the grace, the beauty of Southern ladies, and since I have met you I believe it all.

MRS. P. Ah, colonel!

COL. C. Pardon me if I have said too much; you see, I am a very happy old man. My little

girl marries a soldier; my ward marries a civilian; a load of responsibility is lifted off my shoulders; and my name is henceforth clear from the possibility of a shadow. And for all this happiness I am indebted to the dear old place that bred me, that made me a man, that gave me a career; and so, with every other man who ever wore the bell button, I say God bless the dear old place, long life to West Point!

VON RODEN, NELLIE, COL. C., MRS. P., RANDOLPH, MRS. H.

CURTAIN.

JUN 2 1917

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